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The Effectiveness of a Comprehensive Anti-Bullying Program In Reducing Reported Bullying Behaviors

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The Effectiveness of a Comprehensive Anti-Bullying Program
In Reducing Reported Bullying Behaviors

Lindsay Wold Lazenby

August 2009

A thesis submitted to the
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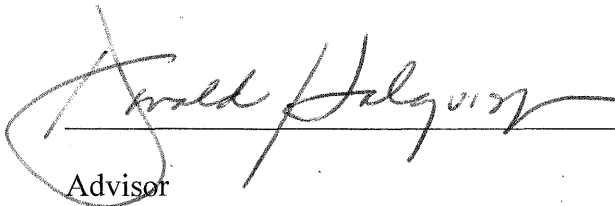
The Effectiveness of a Comprehensive Anti-Bullying Program

In Reducing Reported Bullying Behavior

by

Lindsay Wold Lazenby

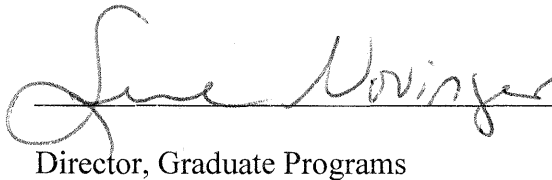
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of Problem

Bullying, an international phenomenon (Hoover, Oliver, & Hazler, 1992; Munthe & Roland, 1989), is one of the most widely practiced forms of aggressive behaviors in American schools (Oliver, Hoover, & Hazler, 1994). Bullying behavior such as name calling, taunting, and physical abuse among students has long been a disruptive factor in the educational realm and continues at a threatening level, affecting the emotional and physical safety of students (Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sayger, & Short-Camilli, 1995). It is estimated that 30 percent of students are involved in bullying situations as either a victim or a bully (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla Ruan, Simons-Morton, & Scheidt, 2001). Research compiled by The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development estimates that 1.6 million students in grades six through ten are affected weekly by bullying in the United States (Olweus & Limber, 1999).

Furthermore, chronic bullying has often led to violent acts of aggression by adolescent victims. Research on school shootings shows that bullying was the antecedent in 75 percent of these horrific incidents (Coloroso, 2003). Bullying has also been linked to numerous suicides, or bullycides, a term coined by Neil Marr and Tim Fields (2001) in the book, *Bullycide: Death a Playtime*. In 2003, the journal *Adolescence* published a study on bullying and victimization, which described how "exposure to repeated insults and rejection by peers can generate deadly results such

as suicide or homicide"(Carney, Hazeler, Dellasega, & Nixon, 2003, p. 3). Reports estimate that 19,000 children attempt suicide annually and many of these attempts may be linked to the unrelenting bullying they endure from their peers (Marr & Field, 2001). According to Carney et al. (2003)

current statistics suggest that a young American attempts to take his or her life every 42 seconds. Though few would argue that bullying alone is to blame, current literature provides many references to students being driven to suicide by peer abuse. (p. 4)

These statistics must act as a red flag to educators and parents alike.

Significance of the Problem

Student performance is now center stage with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. Schools districts are being held accountable for their local state report cards and adequate yearly progress (AYP) reports. In addition, state achievement tests are also required to measure student progress and ensure that all students are meeting set benchmarks. One major goal of the NCLB is to ensure that no child slips through the cracks of the educational system, specifically ethnic minority, those of lower-socioeconomic status, and those receiving Title I services.

The effects of NCLB are clearly being felt in my diverse middle school, situated in a rural area in western New York with a significant Hispanic population. As a teacher in a school in need of improvement (SINI), working under a continuous improvement plan, academic achievement has become our top priority. For example,

our school has added an additional English Language Arts (ELA) prep class to double students' time on task for reading and writing skills with the goal of improving our ELA state scores. A multitude of additional academic interventions are in place for students, but if the school environment does not support a safe learning atmosphere, these efforts may be for naught. Like many middle schools, our ethnically diverse student population struggles with issues of bullying and discipline problems. The pre-treatment Olweus Bully Prevention Program (OBPP) questionnaire shows that 10 percent of our students are bullied on a weekly basis (Great Middle School, April 2007). Given the connections between bullying and the potential for low academic performance, addressing the problem of bullying is essential (Milsom & Gallo, 2006).

Research has shown that bullying peaks in middle school, specifically in the 11-12 year old age group (Zeigler & Rosenstein-Manner, 1991). Adolescence is characterized as a time of great personal upheaval wherein children experience significant physical, emotional, and social changes. As they begin to seek peer approval or try to resist peer rejection, many adolescents will do almost anything to fit in with a group, even if that means remaining silent as their other peers are bullied. Being part of a clique or group is critical; it signifies support and creates a comfort zone for teens.

Unfortunately, many middle school students tacitly approve of bullying behaviors through quiet tolerance because they may lack self-confidence, empathy, or a social group. Craig, Pepler, and Atlas (2000) report that bystanders, students not directly involved with the bullying, are present in 85 percent of bullying episodes and

actually reinforce the bullying 81 percent of the time. Bystanders can be the change agents needed to decrease bullying behaviors. This silent majority of students have the potential to swing the tide and influence their peer's behaviors. Educating students on how to intervene in bullying situations can provide bystanders with the confidence and strategies they need to stand up to bullies and support their bullied peers.

To positively alter the middle school's atmosphere, students' awareness level to bullying must be heightened (Olweus & Limber, 2007). According to Olweus and Limber (2007), there are three crucial steps needed to educate students about bullying:

1. Provide a definition: a person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons (Olweus, 1986, 1993).
2. Discuss unacceptable behaviors and clearly define expectations and rules.
3. Teach students effective intervention strategies to use in bullying situations.

Milson & Gallo (2006) believe that the prevention of bullying is crucial and intervention efforts should be implemented at the middle school level.

As a sixth grade middle school teacher, I witness bullying daily. My experience has shown that the halls and cafeteria are incubators for bullying behaviors, often making these places unpleasant for many adolescents. Students often

ask to eat in my classroom or come into class before the school day begins largely to avoid bullying experiences or the negative atmosphere it creates. Our school has created a bully report form (see Appendix A) for students to report bullying incidents. Numerous bully reports cross my desk every week describing situations in which students were bullied, usually during unstructured or unsupervised times.

The effects of bullying are expansive; they affect the entire school learning environment, not only the bully and the victim (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). When bullying is tolerated the climate within the school building can be compromised. Administrators, teachers and staff sometimes send mixed messages regarding bullying behaviors. School rules define these behaviors as wrong and supposedly unacceptable, yet often there are no punitive consequences associated with students who bully others. Ultimately, the majority of students may come to believe that bullying is just another part of adolescence and if they hope to survive, they better learn how to deal with bullies. The bullies quickly learn that their behaviors may be looked down upon, but may not be held responsible for their actions (Coloroso, 2003). This belief must be dispelled. Educators and parents must work together to help children realize that bullying is not acceptable and cannot be tolerated. I hope that author Barbara Coloroso (2003) is right when she says, "Bullying is a learned behavior. If it can be learned, it can be examined, and it can be changed" (p.xxi).

Statement of Purpose

Research has shown schools that adopt a comprehensive whole-school anti-bullying program are often successful in reducing bullying behaviors (Olweus & Limber, 2007). Bullying is a systematic problem; therefore effective programs are those that are comprehensive and extend beyond the individual child to encompass all school personnel, students, peer group, parents, and the community (Craig & Pepler, 2003; Espelage & Swearer, 2003). A comprehensive program tackles the issues of bullying using an intense intervention, which recognizes that bullying is multi-faceted and therefore requires multiple avenues of interventions.

Our middle school adopted the Olweus Bully Prevention Program (OBPP) in the 2007-2008 school year and it continues today. The goals of the program are to reduce bullying behaviors, increase students' awareness of bullying, and create an empathic community of tolerate and respectful learners. The OBPP operates at four levels: individual, classroom, school, and community. Initially, our students, teachers, and administrators embraced this program with enthusiasm. Today, the New York State mandated program Response to Intervention (RTI) has shifted some attention away from OBPP toward RTI. The school district continues to financially support the OBPP. During the pilot year, ample resources and allotted time were provided for thorough implementation. Currently, the Olweus Committee would like to see more time dedicated to the initiatives of the OBPP. The Olweus Committee, comprised of teachers, staff, administration, and parents, has played an active role to ensure the success of the program. A student committee, BE PROUD (Bully

Elimination Panthers Respect Others' Unique Differences), utilizes student participation to affect change in the school. A myriad of initiatives, trainings, and activities have and continue to be conducted in the middle school.

As a middle school teacher-researcher, I was interested in exploring the research question: What effect does a comprehensive whole-school anti-bullying program have in reducing student-reported bullying behaviors in a middle school?

Data gathered from pre and posttest questionnaires was used to measure the levels of reported bullying behaviors in our school. I compared results from each questionnaire to determine if the Olweus Bully Prevention Program (OBPP) successfully reduced reported bullying incidents after one year of treatment. To evaluate the students' perceptions of our school's climate and environment, I interviewed three focus groups, one per grade level. The focus groups offered students the opportunity to share and discuss their feelings about the bullying situation in our school and enabled me to observe their knowledge and understanding of the issues.

Definition of Terms

Bully: One who abuses power physically, physically, psychologically, or sexually. They tease and taunt others, purposefully exclude certain classmates, and spread rumors (Committee for Children, 2006).

Bullycide: Suicide caused by bullying and depression (Carney et al., 2003).

Bullying: "A student is being bullying when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons and he or she has difficulty defending him or herself" (Olweus, 1993, p.12). Bullying will always include three elements: an imbalance of power, intent to harm, and a threat of further aggression (Coloroso, 2003). For the purpose of this study, bullying is measured using the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (2003).

Bullying behavior is characterized as:

Cyber bullying: The use of information and communication technologies such as email, cell phone, text and instant messaging, defamatory personal websites, and online personal polling websites, to support the deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others (Belsey, 2006).

Physical: hitting, kicking, spitting, choking, pushing, tripping, slapping, poking, hair pulling, biting, fighting, unwanted touching, threatening gestures, theft, and written harassment including oppressive notes and emails. Bullying behavior also includes sexual harassment, gang or group initiations, and hazing (School Violence Resource Center, 2001).

Social/Relational: social ostracism, rumors, shunning, intimidation, extortion, manipulation, and character assassination (School Violence Resource Center, 2001)

Verbal: insults, taunting, degrading teasing, name calling, threats, slander, passing blame, defaming, and blackmail (School Violence Resource Center, 2001).

Bystander: The supporting cast member who aids and abets the bully through acts of omission and commission. They can stand by, look away, or they can actively encourage the bully or join in and become one of the bullies. (Coloroso, 2003).

No Child Left Behind Act: A federal law established on January 8, 2002 and build upon four pillars that are designed to improve student achievement: accountability for results, an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research, expanded parental options and expanded local control and flexibility (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

Target/Victim: Usually a single student, who is generally harassed by a group of two or three students, often with a “negative leader” (Olweus, 1999).

Summary

Given the increasing acts of school violence, it has become important for schools to embrace and recognize the harmful effects of bullying. Solutions are needed to prevent and eliminate bullying behaviors in middle schools where bullying activity peaks. Comprehensive anti-bullying programs are one method of attacking and reducing bullying behaviors within the school.

Our middle school has adopted the Olweus Bully Prevention Program (Olweus & Limber, 2007) for the purpose of reducing bullying behaviors, and improving the climate among students and staff within the our school building. In Chapter 2, I provide a review of literature within the field of bullying, discuss the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs, and establish a case for implementing a comprehensive program in middle schools.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I present a review of literature related to bullying and the effectiveness of anti-bully prevention programs. The literature explores aspects of bullying, adolescent bullying, the effects of anti-bullying programs, and shows that comprehensive, or whole-school anti-bullying programs have been successful in reducing bullying behaviors in educational settings.

Description of Bullying

Bullying, an international phenomenon (Hoover et al., 1992; Munthe & Roland, 1989), is by no means a new problem. Many adults, at any age can remember bullies, or personal experiences of being bullied from their childhood. According to Olweus (1993, p.12), "a student is being bullying when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons and he or she has difficulty defending him or herself." Bullying will always include three elements: an imbalance of power, intent to harm, and a threat of further aggression (Coloroso, 2003).

Forms of Bullying

Bullying behaviors most often present themselves in three forms: verbal, physical, or relational behaviors. Coloroso (2003) points out that the famous saying; "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me" (p.15) is a lie. Words are powerful tools and can break the spirit of a child who is on the receiving

end. In her book, *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*, Coloroso (2003) highlights that verbal abuse is the most common form of bullying and it accounts for 70 percent of all reported bullying incidents. Name-calling, threats, racist remarks, and overt teasing are all examples of verbal bullying. Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, and Scheidt (2001) measured the frequency of bullying by surveying 15, 686 American students in sixth through tenth grade at both private and public schools and found that 29.9 percent of students reported moderate to frequent involvement in bullying. Participation in verbal bullying topped the list for both males and females. It was also the most common type of abuse endured by both sexes. Victims reported that bullies most often attacked with negative comments about their appearance, sexual orientation, sexual harassment, and rumors. In an age of advanced technology, children now face verbal bullying on the phone, through text messages, and even online sitting at their computer. Cyber bullying offers easy access to targets and provides an audience. With creation of camera phones, YouTube, and MySpace, bullies can continually broadcast their ridicule any time of the day subjecting their targets to repeated humiliation (Long, 2008).

Physical bullying is a more aggressive form of bullying because physical contact is made between the bully and the victim. In their study, Nansel et al. (2001) found that boys were more likely than females to be both perpetrators and targets of bullying. Coloroso (2003) believes that boys are often pegged as bigger bullies than girls because they engage in physical bullying: kicking, punching, slapping, hitting, fighting or other behaviors that are easily spotted by adults or teachers. Canadian

researchers, Craig and Pepler (2003) found that 45 percent of boys reported physical victimization in comparison to only 21 percent of females. The researchers found that the proportion of children who use physical aggression decreases with development. Unfortunately many childhood bullies will continue to use power and aggression throughout their life instead of outgrowing their physical bullying tendencies (Craig & Pepler, 2003).

In another Canadian survey of students in grades four through eight, Craig and Pepler (2003) reported that 23 percent of boys admitted to bullying in contrast to only 8 percent of girls. However, this self-reported data may not be reliable because girls often deny that their exclusionary behaviors are a form of bullying. The researchers found that girls bully through indirect aggressive acts within their social relationships.

Coloroso (2003) defines "relational bullying as the systematic diminishment of a child's sense of self through ignoring, isolating, excluding, or shunning" behaviors (p. 17). Intentionally excluding a child from sleepovers, birthday parties, and playground games is often overlooked as a form of bullying. Yet, this social exclusion, according to Coloroso, can be very traumatic for adolescents seeking peer approval.

Bullying within Middle Schools

The middle school is home to the majority of victimization. Statistics show that bullying peaks in the 11 to 12 year old age group as adolescents begin to seek peer approval (Zeigler & Roesenstein-Manner, 1991). The environments of middle

schools are unique in nature because adolescents are in a constant state of physical, emotional, and social change. The developmental issues related to pubertal development in early adolescence become important in identifying the changing nature of power and aggression (Craig & Pepler, 2003). Bullying reaches its zenith in early adolescence, making prevention and intervention efforts in middle school crucial (Gallo & Milsom, 2006).

In a 2001 study, *Talking With Kids About Tough Issues*, Nickelodeon and the Kaiser Family Foundation, a U.S. health care philanthropy, surveyed 823 students. The researchers found that 86 percent of children between the ages of 12 and 15 said they had been teased or bullied at school (Arce, 2001). These statistics place bullying issues as a more pervasive problem than alcohol, drugs, and sex for adolescents. Lauren Asher of the Kaiser Foundation said, "It's a big concern on kids' minds. It's something they're dealing with every day" (Coloroso, 2003, p.12). Sixty-eight percent of the study's participants said that bullying and teasing were big problems for the students in their school (Arce, 2001).

When comparing the Kaiser Foundation's (Arce, 2001) study to Nansel et al. (2001), a discrepancy results. The Kaiser Foundation's statistics are at least three times higher than the findings of Nansel et al., which report only 24.2 percent of students being bullied. However, the comparison between studies may be difficult because the definition of bullying and the methods used for measurement were different. Nansel et al. data was collected through use of a self-report questionnaire and found 29.9 percent of the sample reported moderate to frequent involvement in

bullying, as a bully (13 percent), one who was bullied (10.6 percent), or both (6.3 percent). With a representative sample of more than 15,000 participants, the Nansel et al. study boasts a higher reliability than the data presented in the Kaiser study. Nansel et al.'s large-scale findings placed males and middle school students as the most likely to be involved as both bullies and victims. Hispanic students also reported slightly higher involvement as bullies than White or African American students. African Americans reported being bullied less frequently than both White and Hispanic students. Finally, Nansel et al. found that students living in rural areas reported bullying more often than children from suburban or urban areas.

While it is necessary to recognize the scope of bullying, the consequences of this behavior are the true cause for alarm (Packman, Lepkowski, Overton, & Smaby, 2005). Bullying behavior among students has long been a disruptive factor in the educational realm and continues at a threatening level, affecting the emotional and physical safety of students (Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sager, & Short-Camilli, 1995). Bullying behaviors can spread like a contagious disease if tolerated and untreated within the school environment, and can affect many aspects of middle school life. Bullies and victims are affected directly, but numerous other students or *bystanders*, observe bullying interactions and are impacted by the experience (Coloroso, 2003).

Effects on the Victim

Olweus (1994) describes two types of victims: the passive and the provocative. Passive victims are the most common and are not likely to retaliate when

attacked. Rather, when these children are being victimized, they report high levels of internalizing problems such as anxiety and somatization or the conversion of mental experiences into bodily symptoms, as well as problematic relationships (Craig & Pepler, 2003).

Coloroso (2003) would agree with Craig and Pepler, in her research she found that the constant fear and effort exerted in avoiding the bully takes a toll on a child's mental and physical defense. Eventually, the system breaks down and the mind and body collapse into a state of exhaustion; headaches, stomachaches, panic attacks, sleep deprivation, and insecurity are common symptoms of victimization. Findings from the National Education Association in 1993 estimated that 160,000 children miss school each day out of fear of attack. Weinhold and Weinhold (1998) reported that 10 percent of the student dropout rate results from repeated bullying. In severe cases of victimization, students develop survival strategies such as absenteeism or isolation from peers (Coloroso, 2003) to protect their well-being, but ultimately compromise their education. Bullying can significantly impact a child's ability to learn, as well as his/her school attendance (Rigby, 1998).

The provocative victim is likely to retaliate towards his/her aggressor (Olweus, 1994). These bullied children often turn towards violence because they can no longer tolerate the abuse from their peers. According to Coloroso (2003), "Tremendous shame brought on by rejection and humiliation can drive kids to implode or explode"(p. 53). When victims explode they may take their own life or the lives of others. Research collected by the Secret Service and the U.S. Department of

Education (2002) examined the 37 school shootings that took place in North America between 1974 and 2000, including the tragedy at Columbine High School, and found that 71 percent of the attackers felt persecuted, bullied, threatened, attacked, or injured by others prior to the incident. Recent school tragedies have elicited increasing recognition that bullying problems are serious for both bullies and their victims (Craig & Pepler, 2003).

Effects on the Bully

The study conducted by Nansel et al. (2001) also examined the negative effects associated with children who bully and found positive correlations between bullying behavior and fighting, alcohol use, smoking, the ability to make friends, loneliness, and poor academic achievement. Without intervention Olweus' (1993) evidence shows that the aggressive behaviors of bullies will continue into adulthood, 60 percent of boys who bullied in middle school will have at least one conviction by age 24. Research conducted by Olweus in 2001 corresponds with his earlier work in 1978 which he found that bullies are three times more likely to be criminals as adults than non-bullies. Bullying, then, is a future risk factor for antisocial and criminal behavior.

The Role of the Bystander

Bystanders are, according to Coloroso (2003), the "supporting cast who aid and abet the bully through acts of omission and commission" (p. 66). Bullying often

occurs out of view of adults, but research by Craig, Pepler, and Atlas (2000) reports that peer bystanders are present in 85 percent of bullying episodes and actually reinforce the bullying 81 percent of the time. If these statistics are correct, bystanders have the potential to play a critical role in reducing bullying behaviors. The question must be asked, "Why do students encourage or simply ignore bullying of their peers?" Coloroso (2003) believes that children fail to intervene for several reasons: they are afraid of becoming the next target, they think they will make the situation worse, or they don't know how to intervene. Coloroso (2003) illuminates the importance for students to recognize that they are responsible for helping to create a safe, respectful, empathic, and bully-free environment. Lodge and Frydenberg (2005) investigated the role of peer bystanders and the impact they can play in curbing school bullying. Lodge and Frydenberg suggest if peer bystanders are taught coping skills, schools will see a reduction in bullying behaviors and an increase in academic achievement. Their research shows that teaching strategies, which utilize the support of others, such as social support, would be a positive step in promoting peaceful interventions that effect change at the peer group level. The researchers promote implementing intervention programs that allow students an opportunity to understand their coping behaviors and learn additional strategies in a supportive school setting (Lodge & Frydenberg, 2005). Ultimately, Lodge and Frydenberg believe the goal of anti-bullying programs should be to transform bystanders into active interventionists.

Intervention Programs

Lodge and Fydenberg (2005) posit, "Interventions to counter bullying in schools are now regarded as a matter of high priority by educational authorities"(p.334). Anti-bullying literature and materials are now in wide spread circulation, with some countries legally requiring schools to have an anti-bullying policy (Smith, Ananiadou, & Cowie, 2003). In the United States, 32 states have passed anti-bullying policies or legislation (BullyPolice.org, 2007), which aims to ameliorate bullying in schools. A multitude of research provides evidence that bullying has a direct negative impact on students, teachers, school property, the community, and the educational process (Espelage & Holt, 2001; Oliver et al., 1994; Swearer, Song, & Frazier-Koontz, 2001). Using this wealth of knowledge, The National Association of State Boards of Education (Pekruhn, 2006) recommended that states implement comprehensive bullying policies that go beyond the general provisions or basic policies. Pekruhn highlights four states: Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, and West Virginia, that have gone above and beyond the basic requirements and implemented comprehensive bullying policies, such as passing legislation that allows parents or students to file written bullying reports, mandatory investigation of written bullying incidents, and requiring schools to keep a public list of all verified acts of bullying (Pekruhn, 2006). These states' policies can be models for other states to follow as they create their own anti-bullying policies and laws.

Public concern and research about bullying within the school setting has greatly increased as a result of the school shootings that have occurred in the last

decade according to the U.S. Department of Justice (2001). Studies pertaining to the implementation and success of anti-bullying programs have been conducted around the world (Lodge & Frydenberg, 2005). These studies have found that multiple factors influence bullying behaviors and therefore multiple avenues of intervention are required (Smith, Schneider, Smith, & Ananiadou, 2004). According to Limber (as cited in Espelage & Swearer, 2003, p. 352):

School-based bullying prevention interventions vary significantly in their approach. Some are purely curricular programs, while others provide tips and strategies for teachers to address and prevent bullying within their classrooms. Still others are more comprehensive in approach and focus on changing the school climate and norms with regard to bullying.

Researchers agree that effective programs are comprehensive and involve all school personnel, students, parents, and the community (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Hazler, 1999). Proponents of the comprehensive or whole school approach believe that bullying is systemic and all children are affected by bullying experiences. Therefore, assessment programs need to occur at multiple levels: individual, peer, family, school, and community (Craig & Pepler, 2003).

There are numerous comprehensive anti-bullying programs available for implementation into schools today. The School Violence Resource Center (SVRC) compiled a Briefing Paper on Bullying for the Department of Justice in 2001, which summarized and recommended 15 anti-bullying model programs. All of these

programs are comprehensive in nature, foster positive intervention strategies, establish and enforce acceptable behavioral standards, and encourage open communication.

The Olweus Bully Prevention Program

For the purpose of this study, I focused on SVRC's first choice, The Olweus Bully Prevention Program (OBPP), which was created by Norwegian Professor Dan Olweus in 1993. The OBPP is credited as being the most well researched and best known prevention program available today (Olweus & Limber, 2007). The OBPP was designed for students in elementary, middle, or junior high school and incorporates intervention strategies at four levels: individual, classroom, school, and community (see Table 1). The program's goals are to positively affect change within the environment by uniting the school community by altering the climate within the building. The components of the OBPP are infused to strengthen relationships, raise awareness, reduce existing bullying behaviors and prevent the development of new problems.

Table 2.1: Olweus Bully Prevention Program Components

School Wide	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Form a bullying prevention coordinating committee2. Train committee and all school personnel3. Administer Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire4. Develop school rules against bullying5. Increase supervision in "hot spots" for bullying6. Use consistent positive& negative consequences7. Hold staff discussion groups8. Involve parents9. Hold school-wide "kick-off" events
Classroom Elements	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Post and discuss school rules2. Use consistent positive and negative consequences3. Hold regular classroom meetings4. Incorporate bullying themes across the curriculum5. Hold class-level parent meeting (whenever possible)
Individual Interventions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Intervene on-the-spot when bullying occurs2. Hold follow-up discussions with bullied children3. Hold follow-up discussions with children who bully4. Share information with staff
Community Efforts	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Look for ways to engage the community in your school's bullying prevention efforts.2. Examine strategies for spreading anti-bullying messages beyond the school's doors.

Source: Olweus Bully Prevention Program (Olweus, 1999).

Effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Programs

Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) highlight the paucity of empirical studies to validate the effectiveness of comprehensive anti-bullying programs. Numerous anti-bullying programs exist and have been implemented into schools, however Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) believe more research needs to be done to evaluate the success of these programs and their ability to combat bullying issues.

Rigby (2002), a leading Australian researcher, sought to evaluate the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs by examining 12 carefully designed experimental studies conducted between 1985 and 2001. In his “meta-study,” Rigby included only studies that contained reliable measures before and after the implementation of the intervention program. His research highlighted nine comprehensive programs, which used multiple procedures. These nine studies varied greatly in their approach, design, participants, and assessment methods. However, most data was gathered through self-reports, peer nominations, or systematic observations. His research found eight out of nine programs provided clear evidence of a reduction in bullying after the intervention. He concluded that two factors influenced the success of the anti-bullying programs:

1. The age of the participants: reductions were more pronounced among younger students.
2. Fidelity of implementation: programs that were thoroughly implemented and carried out had higher reduction rates.

Rigby was unable to determine which of the nine programs was most successful because they all contained common threads. However for the purpose of evaluation Rigby classified the nine programs into two categories: problem solving approaches and rules and sanctions.

The five studies incorporating problem-solving approaches, such as mediation, the Method of Shared Concern, and the No Blame Approach. All five studies reported positive results in the reduction of bullying, yet, on average, the

reductions were slight to modest. Rigby (2002) concluded that problem-solving approaches were at least as effective as punitive methods, or the programs that stressed the need for rules.

The studies employing rules and sanctions, or clearly defined expectations and consequences, were modeled from the original Norwegian Project conducted by Olweus in Bergen, Norway. This comprehensive program, first implemented in 1983 in Norwegian schools as a response to a bullying crisis, was a large-scale project involving 40,000 students ages 10 to 15 years old. Forty-two schools were monitored over the course of a two and half year period. The study reported a drastic decrease in the frequency of bully behaviors by approximately 50 percent (Olweus, 1993). The results were significant, yet skeptics wondered if the study could be replicated and the results duplicated. Rigby's (2002) research showed mixed results for interventions based on the Olweus model. Additional studies failed to produce positive outcomes on par with Olweus's Bergen study. The Toronto study (Pepler et al, 1993, 1994) was unable to maintain consistent results and both The Bernese study in Switzerland (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001) and The Flanders study in Belgium (Stevens, de Bourdeaudhuij, & van Oost, 2000) documented small reductions with young children.

In contrast, Roland (1986) conducted a second study in Rogaland, Norway, that utilized the same research design and assessment method as the Bergen Project, but found opposite results. This study included 7,000 students from 37 schools between the ages of 8-16. The results indicate boys reported a 44 percent increase in being bullied and a 24 percent increase in bullying others. Girls reported a 12.5

percent decrease in being bullied, but a 14 percent increase in bullying others. The discrepancies between the two studies present significant problems in evaluating the success of the Olweus program. Rigby believed that the time-lagged design was a weakness because external factors, such as a news story on a child suicide, can influence the outcome of an intervention. Rigby's (2002) study also found that Roland (1986) did not intervene to promote anti-bullying efforts while Olweus remained a prominent figure in the schools and with the implementation of his program. *In The Nature of School Bullying: A Cross-National Perspective* by Smith, Morita, Junger-Tas, Olweus, Catalano, and Slee (1999), Olweus stated, the "studies in Bergen and Rogaland were completely different in terms of planning, data quality, times of measurement, and contact with the schools, and accordingly, also in terms of expected results" (p. 39). Despite the disappointing results from the Rogaland study, the success of the Bergen study led to development of the OBPP.

The success rates of these large-scale intervention studies vary considerably (Frydenberg & Lodge, 2005). There is still a need to examine whether comprehensive programs yield results of lower aggression in the context of U. S. schools (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004). Smith, Ananidou, and Cowie (2003) evaluated multiple programs to determine the effectiveness of varied interventions. One study assessed the success of a modified OBPP in 39 rural schools in South Carolina. This two-year study included 6,250 students in grades four through six. Eleven schools received intervention during the first year and 28 schools acted as control schools. After the second year, seven control schools began receiving treatment. Data was compared

between the intervention and control schools and also between year one and year two of the program. Results for year one showed a 20 percent decrease in bullying rates within the intervention schools, and a 9 percent increase in bullying rates in the control schools. However, after year two, both the intervention and control groups showed a slight increase in rates of victimization. Smith et al. (2003) considered several factors that may provide a possible explanation to the variable outcomes with large-scale interventions. The researchers proposed the following variables as reasons for conflictive data: type of intervention, length of program, support by researchers, effort invested by schools, age of students, student sex and program comprehensiveness. These variables can all play a significant role in a study's outcome.

Bauer, Lozano, and Rivara (2007) also examined the effectiveness of the OBPP in U. S. public middle schools. A nonrandomized-controlled trial with ten public middle schools (seven intervention and three control groups) was conducted in Seattle, Washington. The 6,518 students were assessed through pre-and post-implementation to measure bullying behaviors. The purpose of the study was two-fold: 1) to characterize the implementation of the OBPP in the intervention schools, and 2) to compare schools with and without treatment to determine if the program was effective. Specifically, the study evaluated the effectiveness of the OBPP to reduce student reports of victimization, improve attitudes towards bullying, increase students' readiness to intervene, and improve the general school climate. The sample reported one third or 30 percent of students being a victim of frequent relational

bullying in both the pre and posttest surveys. The researchers found that there was no overall effect of the OBPP on student-reported victimization. However, intervention schools reported a 21 percent increase in students' readiness to intervene. With regard to attitude, sixth graders were 21 percent more likely to be empathic towards victims. Bauer et al. (2007) concluded that the results were disappointing and suggests that the OBPP may not be as effective as hoped.

The findings from Smith et al. (2003) and Bauer et al. (2007) are more significant than Rogaland's because both studies were conducted in the United States and were able to produce some positive gains, although neither matched the success of the Bergen Study (1983). However, both studies had limitations which affected their outcomes. The study conducted by Smith et al. (2003) in South Carolina contained aspects of the OBPP and offered additional resource and support materials, but it was not the identical program because not all participating schools agreed to implement the OBPP to its full potential. Also this study focused only on rural schools, which Nansel et al. (2001) found to have higher rates of bullying behaviors than urban or suburban areas. These two factors may have played a role in the contradictory results. The Bauer et al. (2007) study's limitations are profound. In 2002, the state of Washington passed a mandate requiring all schools to implement anti-bullying policies by August 2003. Prescribed initiatives, or new programs driven by the district administration without teacher input, often lack support from the ground up, which could have significantly effected the implementation of the OBPP (Bauer et al, 2007). Five of seven of the intervention schools struggled to hold the

recommended staff discussions and class meetings. Only one of seven schools implemented a community-level component and only two schools maintained high enthusiasm for the program. These findings suggest that the implementation of the program was not thorough and therefore the results are not surprising (Bauer et al, 2007).

Ultimately, no two studies have been identical and therefore identical results have not been yielded. But then again, it will never be possible for any studies to be identical because different factors are present; the most influential being the student population.

Summary

In summary, as the research and literature shows, bullying is a serious problem in schools today. It can have severe negative consequences, especially for those who are victimized over a period of time. Children spend the majority of their time and energy at school; a safe learning environment without the fear of being victimized is essential for success (Smith et al., 2003).

Many schools are implementing anti-bullying programs to combat the negative effects of bullying. Research shows that schools should explore the implementation of programs that assist bullies, aid their victims, and strengthen the positive relationships between teachers, bullies, victims, and all other students (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004). Many recommendations have been made with regard to how to approach the problem of bullying, and most researchers agree that

the most effective programs are those which are comprehensive in their scope (Espelage & Swearer, 2003).

The Olweus Bully Prevention Program (OBPP) was the first comprehensive whole-school intervention implemented on a large scale and systematically evaluated (Smith et al., 2004). Several studies have attempted to replicate the original implementation of the program and yield significant reductions of reported cases of victimization. To date, no study utilizing the OBPP has reported reductions in bullying on par with Olweus' Bergen Project of 1983.

However, the OBPP does provide the structure and guidance needed for schools to raise students' awareness and implement an anti-bullying program (Olweus, 1999). Schools that have been dedicated to changing the climate within the school building do so by educating the entire community: students, staff, administrators, and parents have been successful. The research I conducted through this study was designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of the OBPP on a much smaller scale, within one school. Our school's goals were to positively alter the school's environment, heighten student's awareness to bullying and teach bystanders to intervene in bullying situations. Support for the OBPP was placed at all four levels during implementation. Our ultimate goal was to reduce reported bullying incidents in our middle school.

Chapter 3: Methods

In this chapter, I describe the methods that I used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Olweus Bully Prevention Program (OBPP) that was piloted in my middle school during the 2007-2008 year. I describe the research design used to determine the effectiveness of the program. I present the individual research question posed in the study, the participants, the methods used for data collection, the variables, the procedures used for collecting the data, and the data analysis procedures.

Research Design

The goal of this research was to determine the effects of the Olweus Bully Prevention Program (OBPP) implemented into our middle school in the spring of 2007. The OBPP operates as a comprehensive or multi-leveled anti-bullying intervention program, which means that students receive intervention strategies at the individual, classroom, school, and community level. The comprehensive approach utilizes multiple avenues of intervention to reduce bullying behaviors, with the main objectives centering around:

1. Increase awareness of bullying for students, staff, and parents
2. Increase the likelihood that bystanders intervene in bullying situations
3. Decrease the number bullying incidents
4. Prevent future bullying behaviors from occurring
5. Affect a positive, respectful climate change in the middle school
6. Create a safe and empathic environment for students to learn and achieve

I realized that if the program is successful in raising awareness, it may simultaneously raise students' sensitivity levels to bullying as well. The study's purpose was to provide insight into the systemic world of bullying and evaluate the students' understanding and their perceptions associated with bullying in our middle school. I also compared the frequency of students' self-reported bullying experiences before and after one year of treatment to determine what impact, if any, the interventions had on our student population. Below is a brief overview of how the OBPP functioned within our school.

Student Level:

1. students signed a panther promise
2. student committee training (23 students)
3. BE PROUD student club

Classroom Level:

1. curriculum taught weekly in core classes
2. rules posted in all classroom
3. bully report forms located in classrooms

School Level:

1. Olweus two day teacher training – selected group about 20 teachers, varying grade levels and disciplines
2. student training (23 students) –one day training
3. half day workshop training for all teacher
4. Three summer Olweus committee (staff) workshop
5. pep rally first day of school –Fall 2007
6. weekly Olweus staff meetings
7. weekly BE PROUD student meetings – open all students
8. four reporting bully boxes – placed in central locations
9. positive messages, signs, and banners placed around the school

Community Level:

1. student presentation to elementary schools
2. student/staff Board of Education
3. student/staff evening presentation for parents – invitation to all 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th grade parents in the district
4. Geneva's Got Game – community nights hosted at the middle school

As a member of the Olweus Committee and as a researcher, my role was to investigate and determine the effectiveness of the Olweus Anti-Bully Prevention Program (OBPP) implemented into our middle school beginning April of 2007. Using multiple measures, I evaluated the efforts taken by teachers and staff to reduce bullying behaviors and improve the climate of the school building.

For this study, I focused on the question, what effect does a comprehensive whole-school anti-bullying program have in reducing student-reported bullying behaviors in a middle school? To thwart issues associated with single method research and to provide validation and inquiry of my findings, I utilized multiple triangulation, or multiple sources of data and methodologies to support my results.

Participants and Setting

The participants were middle school students from a small rural/urban community in western New York located within the Finger Lakes region. Data was collected from approximately 550 students who attend this diverse public middle school. A well-known private college plays a defining role in the make-up of the city, but the wealthy college community portrays an inaccurate image of the resident population. The 2007 City Data Report estimated the poverty rate of children 5-17 years of age was 24 percent in 2004, 4 percent higher than New York State's rate.

The school is currently operating under a SINI, or school in need of improvement, classification. Students who receive special education services, are economically disadvantaged, or part of a minority (e.g., Hispanic) have struggled to

meet AYP, or adequate yearly progress on the New York State Report Card. Efforts have been made at all levels to improve the quality of instruction and the educational environment for all students. One such effort is the implementation of an anti-bullying program. Functioning in a lower socio-economic bracket, 53 percent of students receive free or reduced lunch in our district and 56 percent of our middle school students receive free or reduced lunch.

I employed three focus group interviews to gather and evaluate the students' perceptions of our school's climate and environment. I interviewed sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students during forty-five minute focus groups. This qualitative data provided insight into our students' observations and feelings about the climate of our school, specifically the present bullying situation. I collected quantitative data collected from pre (2007) and post (2008) Olweus student questionnaires which measured the frequency of the reported bullying behaviors in our school after one year of implementation and treatment.

The participants for the focus group interviews consisted of 21 students, from grades six, seven, and eight, 7 students per grade level. All students were asked to participate in the school-wide pre and posttest questionnaires as part of a district initiative to determine the extent of bullying behaviors they experience at school. Approximately 550 middle school students, 175 sixth graders, 190 seventh graders, and 195 eighth graders, took the questionnaires. Sixty-six percent of the students are Caucasian, 20 percent are African-American, 13 percent are Hispanic and 1 percent are Asian. Approximately, 54 percent of the participants are female.

Procedures of Study

In an effort to obtain students' perceptions on bullying and accurate information on the current levels of bullying behaviors I utilized a main and secondary data sources. Qualitative, focus group interviews, and quantitative, pretest and posttest questionnaire, methods were administered throughout the study.

I contacted the six team leaders in our school and asked them for the names of 5 to 10 students. I asked the team leaders to nominate students they thought might offer different perspectives and represented a sample of our school's population. I sent a parental consent form (see Appendix B) home to all nominated students two weeks prior to the interview. All students who returned their Statement of Informed Consent permission slips were selected to participate in the focus group. I did not select specific student from the original list provided by the teachers because I wanted as many students as possible to participate in the groups.

I conducted all three focus group interviews between June 12 and June 19, 2008. Students were asked to meet only once after-school in the library for approximately 45 minutes. All three sessions began around 3:30 pm and concluded around 4:15 pm. I provided drinks and snacks for all participants.

Focus Group Description

The sixth grade focus group included four female and three male students (see Table 3.1). Five students, three females and two males, were Caucasian. One female student was Hispanic and one male student was born in Eastern Europe. Three

students, one female and two males, were in the same social group and traveled together in the advanced class, or gifted program for math and English classes. Three female students received AIS services for math and reading. Four students, two females and two males, were members of the anti-bullying group, BE PROUD.

Table 3.1: Sixth Grade Focus Group Participants

Participant	Gender	Ethnicity	Academics	OBPP Club
Student A	Female	Caucasian	Title Services	Be Proud
Student B	Female	Caucasian	Title Services	Be proud
Student C	Female	Caucasian	Gifted Program	
Student D	Female	Hispanic	Title Services	
Student E	Male	Caucasian		Be Proud
Student F	Male	Caucasian	Gifted Program	Be Proud
Student G	Male	European	Gifted Program	

The seventh grade focus group consisted of five female students and two male students (see Table 3.2). Five of the students, three females and two males, were Caucasian. One female student was African-American, and one female student was Asian. The students represented very different social, athletic, and academic groups within the school. One female student received academic services and four students, three females and one male, were in the advanced math class. Two of these students, one female and one male, were in the original anti-bullying club and were also formally trained by the Olweus Program.

Table 3.2: Seventh Grade Focus Group Participants

Participant	Gender	Ethnicity	Academics	OBPP Club
Student A	Female	Caucasian		
Student B	Female	Caucasian	Gifted Program	Be Proud
Student C	Female	Caucasian	Gifted Program	
Student D	Female	Asian	Gifted Program	
Student E	Female	African American	Title Services	
Student F	Male	Caucasian		
Student G	Male	Caucasian	Gifted Program	Be Proud

The eighth grade focus group was comprised of three female students and four male students (see Table 3.3). Four of the students, two females and two males, were Caucasian. Two students, one female and one male, were African-American. One male student was Hispanic. The students represented a wide range of social groups within the school; they had differing friends, hobbies, and interests. The students also had varying levels of academic interventions. Two students, one female and one male, received AIS services in both math and reading and one male student was classified with an IEP and attended a BOCES program for half of the school day. Three of the other students, two females and one male, were placed in advanced math and science courses. One female student was apart of the original anti-bullying group, which was formally trained under the Olweus model.

Table 3.3: Eighth Grade Focus Group Participants

Participant	Gender	Ethnicity	Academics	OBPP Club
Student A	Female	Caucasian	Title Services	
Student B	Female	Caucasian		
Student C	Female	Caucasian	Gifted Program	Be Proud
Student D	Male	Hispanic	IEP	
Student E	Male	Caucasian	Gifted Program	
Student F	Male	Caucasian		
Student G	Male	African American	Title Services	

Each focus group was comprised of 7 students whose participation was completely voluntary. I required that students not use their own name or names of other students or faculty when speaking to ensure confidentiality. I reviewed several expectations prior to the start of each focus group interview: respect others' views, share honestly, but do not use specific student's names when disclosing information.

Participants sat in a circle around a table to answer a series of questions about bullying based on their own perceptions and experiences during the year.

At the beginning of each focus group interview, I had the students individually respond to three questions in writing (see Appendix C) before discussing all seven questions aloud (see Appendix C). I audio taped each group's conversation to allow me the ability to better facilitate the discussion. I transcribed the tapes verbatim and destroyed them at the conclusion of the study. The students' written responses were also destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Additionally, I used a quantitative method of data collection to compliment the information gathered from the main data source, the focus group interviews. The Olweus Committee administered the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (BVQ) as the first step of the OBPP to gather baseline data (see Appendix D). Questionnaires were distributed, collected, and tabulated by the Olweus Committee operating in the middle school. The BVQ was distributed at two assessment points, using a 13-month interval during the study. The pre-test was administered to the entire student population in March of 2007 and the posttest was given in April of 2008.

I utilized the questionnaires as secondary data for the purpose of this study: 1) the school collected this data for their own purposes 2) I received archived data without personal information 3) Parental permission was unnecessary, therefore I was able to compare the questionnaires used in the study without difficulty.

All present students in the middle school took the 2008 BVQ during first period, with 40 minutes for completion. Teachers received specific instructions

(see Appendix D) and conveyed the purpose and importance of the questionnaire, while discussing the need for honest responses with the students. The participants were specifically instructed not to write their names on the questionnaire, they were only asked their grade level and gender.

The city's 2007 Data Report states, "Only 41 percent of eighth graders in the district met the state standards in ELA in 2004-2005" (p. 27). Many students in the middle school are reading below grade level and the goal of the questionnaires was to illicit truthful answers not measure their reading ability. To ensure that all students, in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade could understand each question, the teachers read aloud the pre and post tests. The questionnaire was also translated into Spanish for our Hispanic students who receive English as a Second Language (ESL) services. At the completion of the questionnaire, teachers collected the BVQ from each participant. Members of the Olweus Committee collected the completed questionnaires from labeled boxes in the main office.

Data Collection

I used the following questions during the focus group interviews to measure students' sensitivity levels, perceptions, and perspectives on bullying within our middle school. Students independently answered questions 1, 3, and 4 in writing and then participated in a focus group discussion to address the other questions. The

questions and our conversations around them enabled students to share and explore additional issues or their thoughts about bullying.

Questions:

1. How would you define bullying?
2. Do you feel safe at school? Why or why not?
3. What strategies do you use when you witness bullying?
4. Have you used the bully report forms this year? If so, please explain.
 - a. Do you feel the bully boxes are useful for reporting bullying incidents? Why or why not?
5. Do you know students who are bullied often: on a daily or weekly basis?
 - a. Can you explain why you believe these students are bullied?
6. Do you know students who bully other students often? Why?
7. Describe a situation where you witnessed students, teachers, or staff displaying respectful and tolerant actions to people of different ethnicities, races, genders, or abilities?

Justification of Methods

I selected the focus group interview method as the means of gathering data for several reasons. The interview allowed me to gather more specific data by speaking with students about their perceptions of the program and the impact the OBPP has played within their peer group and the whole school setting. The discussion offered

students a forum to voice their opinions and feelings about the OBPP, and its effectiveness and limitations.

Recording and transcribing student's answers established reliability of the method. I met with all three focus groups in the same location, at the same time, and within a two-week period to prevent time-lagged complications.

I used, the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (BVQ) as a secondary data source to collect data on reported bullying behaviors within our school. This instrument was developed by Dan Olweus in 1996 and revised in 2004. The BVQ is an internationally published questionnaire based on the Likert rating scale. The 56-item questionnaire measured the students' perceptions of bullying within their peer interactions and experiences at the middle school, specifically related to bully/victim problems such as, exposure to various physical, verbal, indirect, racial, or sexual forms of bullying/harassment, various forms of bullying other students, where bullying occurs, pro-bully and pro-victim attitudes, and the extent to which the social environment (teachers, peers, parents) is informed about and reacts to the bullying (see Appendix E).

The questionnaire is denoted as E01-SENIOR because it is specifically designed for students in grades 6-10 or higher. The BVQ is a multiple-choice format and can be broken down into several sections. The first five items are general questions to collect demographic data relating to the grade level, gender, and overall happiness of the participants at school and with themselves. For example, one item asks, "How do you like school?"

The next 15 items address students being bullied. The frequency of bullying behaviors (physical, verbal, and relational), the duration, and the most common locations of bullying are assessed in these questions. These 15 items are designed to flag each type of bullying. For example:

Item 5: I was called mean names, made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way:

- It hasn't happened to me
- Only once or twice
- Two or three times a month
- About once a week
- Several times a week.

An additional 13 items ask students to self-report the frequency and type of bullying behaviors they engage in at school. (For example, "I hit, kicked, pushed and shoved him or her around.") Students are asked to select the frequency of their own behavior by choosing one of the same answers as in Item 5: It hasn't happened to me, only once or twice, two or three times a month, about once a week, or several times a week. Finally, the last six items on the questionnaire calculate student's perceptions of peer and adult intervention in bullying situations. These questions also discuss reporting techniques and the frequency at which students report bullying incidents to teachers and adults at home.

The BVQ is in its second publication and has been administered to more than 5000 students worldwide. In 2000, Dan Olweus wrote about the psychometric information pertaining to the questionnaire, stating, "When used at the individual level, combinations of items for being victimized or bullying others have yielded internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's α alpha) in the .80's" (Huffman and

Tarshis, 2007). Often, however, the school is the natural unit of analysis, and then, of course the reliabilities are even higher, typically in the .90's. With regard to the validity of self-reports on variables related to bully/victim problems, Swedish studies (Olweus, 1978) correlated in the .40-.60 range (Olweus, 1994, 2001).

Data Analysis

The BVQ offered a myriad of quantitative comparison possibilities within the 56 item questionnaire. To determine if there was a decline in the number of student-reported bullying behaviors, I collected and analyzed data from the 2007 and 2008 BVQ questionnaires. I also wanted to compare bystander reactions and if students were more willing to intervene after being taught specific strategies. To do so, I compared several items from both the pre and post questionnaires to measure the efficacy of the OBPP.

I selected eight items from the BVQ to analyze and use for comparison. Items 2 and 15 determined the percentage of boys vs. girls reporting bullying behaviors and which gender is more involved in bullying their peers. Item 3 measured the number of good friends students have in the school. Friendship can be used as a variable in determining the type of student that is bullied.

Items 5, 6, and 7 measured the frequency of verbal, physical, relational bullying. These items show the type of behaviors that permeate our school. Also, these items were valuable in determining if there has been a reduction in reported bullying incidents.

Finally, I calculated the responses to items 40 and 54 to show the levels of empathy bystanders, or students witnessing the bullying have for their peers.

The calculations for the 2007 and 2008 BVQ were based on the number of students that responded to each item. By using the number of students who took the questionnaire at each grade level, their responses to each letter choice was then converted into a percentage. Data from both the 2007 BVQ and 2008 BVQ was compiled by the Olweus Committee and presented in completed tabulated packets. I drew comparisons between the results from both tests to measure the frequency of bullying behaviors from the pre (2007) and post (2008) tests. I compared results across grade levels, cohort groups, and school-wide averages from both years. Participant questionnaires were excluded if (a) demographic items were left blank; or (b) the questionnaire was incomplete.

Limitations

The major limitation in this study is the inability or impossibility of measuring bullying frequency. The closest gauge was the students' perceptions of bullying frequency. The challenge was trying to calculate or measure the reduction of bullying behaviors given the heightened awareness to bullying. Teaching students about bullying is critical, but for the purpose of the study it created an increased sensitivity among the students. As their sensitivity developed, students noticed and intervened in more bullying situations. Therefore their responses on the post-treatment

questionnaire showed, in some cases, an increase in bullying behaviors when compared to the pre-treatment responses.

Another limitation is the limited sample size. I interviewed a small sample, about 5 percent of our student population; however, my study is solely focused on the students' view points not other school personnel. Ultimately, the issue of sensitivity may extend beyond the scope of my study.

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of my study was two-fold. First, to determine how effective the Olweus Bully Prevention Program has been at reducing the reported bullying behaviors and secondly, to evaluate the students' perceptions and awareness levels associated with bullying in the school's environment.

In this chapter, I present my qualitative findings from the three focus group interviews I conducted with sixth, seventh, and eighth grade middle school students. The students' answers and opinions to seven specific bullying questions are highlighted within this chapter. Student responses are separated by grade level and then each question is summarized using all three perspectives. I also present quantitative findings and comparisons which emerged through the data I gathered from the 2007 and 2008 Bully/Victim Questionnaires (BVQ). I utilized eight explicit items for comparison which addressed my research question.

Focus Group Written Questions

Written Question 1: How would you define bullying?

Sixth Grader's Responses:

The three of seven students used the word hurtful or hurting in their responses. One female student even wrote, "Bullying is threatening, mean, nasty, and horrifying." One male student defined bullying as, "A way to hurt another person." The sixth graders were able to determine that bullying was

making someone feel uncomfortable. Another male student said, "Bullying is making another person uncomfortable in someway."

Seventh Graders' Responses:

Approximately 45 percent of the seventh graders, or three of seven students incorporated "picking on others" or "making fun of others" into their responses. One female student defined bullying as, "Someone or more than one person getting picked on or hurt, even if the bully doesn't mean to hurt the target!" The seventh graders recognized that bullying was based around power and dominance. One male student wrote, "Bullying is when someone with greater power or size uses that to be mean to someone." Two female students even named the types of bullying as physical, relational, and verbal. She defined bullying as, "When they {the bully} emotionally degrades others and mentally and physically hurts others."

Eighth Graders' Responses:

The four of seven eighth graders used the words "being mean" to other students to define bullying. However, the majority of these students were able to make the connection that bullying is intentional, or actions done on purpose. One female student described bullying as, "People being mean to other people on purpose." Several students also named the three types of bullying. A female student wrote, "I would define bullying by when someone bullies someone mentally, physically, or emotionally." One male student's

definition, "Bullying is the intentional singling out of someone to target them publicly."

All students provided accurate pieces to the definition of bullying. They all were able to articulate the negative associations of bullying and understand that bullying is harmful to other students. All of our middle school students were provided a definition of the term bullying at the beginning of the school year through anti-bullying lessons and this definition also appears within their student agenda:

At the middle school, bullying is defined as behavior by an individual(s) that results in the disrespect or harm of another. It may appear in the following forms:

- *Unwelcome touching: hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking*
- *Unwelcome comments: name calling, teasing, or hurtful note-writing*
- *Spreading rumors or purposefully leaving out others*

The students at each successively higher grade level were able to incorporate more details, ultimately painting a clearer and more holistic picture of bullying. The sixth graders defined bullying and recognized that it was hurtful, while the seventh graders were able to distinguish that bullying is often based on dominance and having power over another person. Finally, the eight grade students identified that bullying is an intentional action.

Written Question 2: What strategies do you use when you witness bullying?

Sixth Graders' Responses:

Six of seven students said that they would try to stop bullying behaviors. Two students, one female and one male wrote that they would say, "We don't do that here at the middle school." One male student wrote that he would try to

remove the target from the situation. He said, "I try to get the bully to stop and then remove the target from the situation." Another female student said she would tell a teacher that another student was being bullied. One female student said, "I tell the person who is bullying to stop. I also ask them how would you like it if someone was doing that {bullying} to you?"

Seventh Graders' Responses:

Again more than 50 percent, or four of seven students, said that would intervene and stop the bully. One female student said she would, "Attempt to stop it {the bullying} or stick up for the people." One seventh grader also said she would "pull" the target away from the bullying situation. Four of the seven students said that would then tell a teacher or an adult about the bullying they witnessed. One male student wrote, "I tell the bully to stop and then report it to a teacher." Another male student's strategy was to "tell a teacher, to have someone else deal with it. I know I should stop it, but I'm not comfortable doing it." One female student admitted, "I usually don't get involved; I don't want to get bullied too."

Eighth Graders' Responses:

Five of seven eighth grade students said they would try to stop the bullying. One male student wrote, "I say, 'We don't do that here {at our school}.'" A female student said, "I tell the bully to stop and try to extract the person {the target} from the situation." Another female student described her strategies, "I often use strategies like first telling the bully to stop and if that does not work

I tell the victim that he/she should walk away or I would go tell a teacher.”

One male student said, “I just keep out of it.” Others were divided as to what they should do when they witness bullying, two female students said that they would remove the target from the situation; two students, one female and one male, said they would tell an adult or teacher, and two students, one female and one male, said they would tell the bully that what they’re doing is wrong and they need to stop.

Students at all three grade levels used the strategies that had been taught to them during the course of the anti-bullying lessons. All middle school students had participated in at least five anti-bullying lessons over the course of the 2007-2008 school year. The vast majority, 18 of 21 students named specific strategies that they employed when they witnessed bullying. Across all three focus groups, the strategies the students named were the same. However, the sixth graders seemed to have the strongest reactions to intervention. They seemed most willing to get involved and want to stop the bullying. The seventh graders did however; claim to report the bullying most often to a teacher or an adult. The eighth grade answers were a little more aloof in their responses, which could be related to maturity, their perception of less bullying in eighth grade, or the fact that students appear to be more focused on their own responsibilities than hallway behavior.

Written Question 3: Have you used the bully report forms this year? Are the bully boxes useful for reporting bullying incidents? (See Appendix A)

Sixth Graders' Responses:

Fifty-seven percent, four of seven students, said they had never used the bully report forms. The other three students, two female and one male, said they used them frequently. One male student wrote, "I have used the bully report forms about five million times. I write them for friends and myself." Another female student said, "I have used the bully report forms about the whole year." More than 50 percent, or four sixth graders, felt that the bully boxes were useful because they provided anonymity and informed teachers without students having to be the snitch. One female student felt the bully boxes were useful because "You don't have to write your name and it {the report form} goes right to the office. Two other female students were in agreement; one stated, "I do feel that the forms are useful because they {the bullies} always get talked to and the other said, "The teachers know about it {the bullying situation}. Two male students did not feel the boxes were useful; one said he thought "the bully could rip it open and eat the report."

Seventh Graders' Responses:

The majority of seventh graders, five of seven students, did not use the bully report forms and the two female students which did utilize the forms had only done so on rare occasions. One of the girls said she had used the report forms "When I was picked on in science class and one other time when a group of kids were making fun of one kid in social studies." Four students or fifty-

seven percent said the bully boxes were not useful for reporting bullying incidents. The bulk of the seventh graders felt that the bully boxes were not taken seriously by the middle school students. One female student confessed, "I don't feel they {the bully boxes} are useful because most kids treat it as a joke and because I think people have started to ignore them. A male student wrote, "I don't think the bully boxes are working. I mostly see people put fake reports in and I seriously and truly don't think they are helping our school." Fake reports or reports written in retaliation were cited as major problems. Another female student said she did not think the bully boxes were useful, "People blame others for things they didn't do and they blackmail others with it {the bully report form}. The students also conveyed that they felt there was a lack of consequences associated with the bully report forms; therefore, they were a waste of their time. One female student said she felt the bully boxes didn't work because "there isn't a big action, but if you do it {report the bullying} verbally they {the teachers} take immediate action." Three students, two females and one male, thought that the bully boxes could be useful if used properly. One of the girls wrote, "I think they {bully boxes} would be useful if people used them the right way."

Eighth Graders' Responses:

Eighty-six percent, or six of seven eighth graders, said they did not use the bully report forms. Students wrote, "No, because nobody has singled me out like that," or "No, I haven't had the need to {write a report}," or "I have not

used a bully report form this year because they are not taken seriously by many students.” One male student in the group had written one bully report when he was hit in the face. However, the majority, four of seven eighth graders, recognized the positive nature of the bully boxes. One female student wrote, “Yes, It {the bully box} lets the victim tell what happened without saying it to someone’s face.” Another male student admitted that they worked because they had been written on him all year and he was spoken to by teachers. The eighth graders understood that the bully boxes provided an outlet for some shy or reserved students to report bullying behavior. Three students agreed with the seventh graders that the boxes were often abused and used in inappropriate ways by immature students. For example, one male student wrote, “Many people use it {the bully box} for threats or use it when they don’t need it. One eighth grade girl confessed, “I have no idea if the bully boxes are useful.” One male student wrote, the bully boxes were not useful “because we {the students} will never use them because we love bullying.”

According to the responses from all three focus groups, the sixth graders exercised the most use out of the bully report forms and the bully boxes. Students develop at different rates and display varying levels of maturity throughout adolescence. As a sixth grade teacher, I interact with many immature students. There is a huge transition from the two elementary schools within the district into the

middle school. Students are mixed together with many new faces and presented an entirely new schedule of rotation and freedom. Many sixth graders haven't developed the "too cool for school" attitude and the bully report forms represent the ability to voice their feelings and know that they will be heard.

The seventh and eighth graders may have been at a disadvantage because the year before the school did not have the bully report forms or bully boxes. Unlike the sixth graders, the older students felt that the forms and boxes were unnecessary. One male seventh grader wrote, "I mostly see people mess around with the bully box and not take it seriously." Where the sixth graders didn't know any different and assumed the forms and bully boxes were just part of middle school life.

Sixty-six percent or fourteen of twenty-one students interviewed did not use the bully report forms, but they could recognize the benefit they possessed for students who were targets of bullying.

Focus Group Discussion Questions

Discussion Question 1: Do you feel safe at school?

Sixth Graders' Responses:

Each member of the group said they did feel safe at school. Three students spoke about being afraid when the police dogs came in to search the building. One male student shared, "I feel safe at school except for when the police came in or there was a rumor going around that someone brought a knife to school." They also were fearful when rumors spread about students bringing

weapons, usually knives to school. All the students could name someone who stayed home from school if they were being threatened or people wanted to beat them up. A female student shared, "They {the target} hear rumors and then they don't want to come to school the next day because they don't want to get beat up." Another male student said, "I feel safe, but I do know other kids that might not feel safe at school because of other students that constantly badger them, shove them, and make threats at them, but I think our school is a safe environment." The sixth grade students, who are the youngest students in the school, and usually the smallest, said that a student's size did play a role in how safe he or she felt at school. One female student commented, "They're {sixth graders} not strong enough to say stop threatening me or stop bullying me." The students shared that the number of friends also contributed to the feeling of being safe and feeling confident at school. One male student, and a member of the BE PROUD club, spoke about friends, "It's like the Beatles' song "With a Little Help from My Friends," my friends all help me when I get bullied.

Seventh Graders' Responses:

All the group members chuckled. Each of the seventh graders indicated that they felt very safe and comfortable at school. One female student said, "I feel safe at school because I'm not mean to anybody and I don't have anyone on my bad side." Another female participant said, "I feel safe at school because people don't scare me, there are no people to hurt me." They spoke of nice,

friendly teachers and staff. They had no hesitation in approaching an adult if they needed something or were having troubles with other students. One male student said, "I feel safe at school because if anyone needs to talk to somebody they can basically go to any teacher and talk about their feelings." The seventh graders did say they knew of many kids who did not feel safe and really feared unsupervised areas of the school. One student said, "Some students only feel safe when there is a teacher around, when they are alone in the hall with the other kids they really don't feel safe anymore."

Eighth Graders' Responses:

All members of the eighth grader group emphatically agreed that they felt safe at school. They took a few minutes and reminisced over their middle school days and remembered how they felt as sixth graders. When asked if they feared getting beat up or scared for their personal safety; one male student responded, "Not this year, but maybe in sixth grade." The eighth graders said that a person's size plays a significant role in how safe students feel at school. One female student mentioned, "Kids that are smaller are often targeted by bullies." One male student did say, "Most bullying in the eighth grade is in the hallways and lunch, but it also happens in class when the teacher isn't paying attention or leaves the room." Another female student added, "Yea, it {bullying} is under the breath comments that goes on during class."

In summary, all students who participated in the focus group interviews indicated that they do feel safe at school. Experience, age, and maturity bring comfortability and safe feelings to the older students. The students said that students who are bullied feel safest in classrooms and supervised areas of the school. One seventh grader shared, "Some kids only feel safe when there is a teacher around." A sixth grader added, "Bullying in the classroom is minor because the teachers see pretty much everything, nothing really bad happens there. But in the hallways, lunchroom, gym locker room it {bullying} is the worst." Unsupervised areas of the school, where no teachers or cameras are present, like the corners, stairways, bathrooms and locker rooms can be scary places for students that are targets of bullying. One sixth grade male student shared his personal experience, "I've been beaten up in the locker room and bathroom. I got pulled into the bathroom and almost got a swirly."

Discussion Question 2: Do you know students who are bullied often: on a daily or weekly basis?

Sixth Graders' Responses:

All students in the group said "absolutely" and shook their heads yes. They all knew kids that were truly bullied on a daily basis. They provided a myriad of reasons why some students are more prone to be targets of bullying. "Size, poor hygiene," clothing, and being unpopular were all reasons the sixth graders named for why students were bullied. One male student hypothesized, "I think kids that get bullied the most don't have a group or any real friends."

They might want friends, but they don't even have a chance because they are always bullied and then other kids don't want to hang out with them because they don't want to also be bullied or made fun of because they are hanging out with that kid." Two students, one female and one male, agreed that smart, studious kids get bullied. The girl said, "Kids get bullied who are smarter than other kids and actually want to learn and pay attention, so the other kids who don't care make fun of them." The group also said that students who are annoying or do not know how to properly interact with other students are bullied. One male student shared, "Yes, I know one kid who is bullied everyday all day, every period because of his size, he's a small kid, but he goes for the eye for an eye approach and always fights back and that just angers the kids and keeps it going. If they swear and cuss, then he just does the same thing right back." Another female student agreed and said that one boy who is constantly bullied "lies a lot and annoys other kids." One male student said, "Some kids bring it on themselves kind-of because they are rude or annoying."

Seventh Graders' Responses:

Each of the seven students was able to think of at least one student they knew who was bullied often. Five of seven students knew of at least three or more students that were bullied on a daily basis. Three students, two females and one male, felt that appearance was a major reason that students were picked on and targeted. One female responded, "I know one person who is picked on

by most people and all the people in the same group because of the way she looks, her facial features.” “One girl is bullied because of her hair,” said a female participant. Lack of money was another cause for bullying to ensue. Another female participant share, “It {bullying} is usually because of their financial status or where they live because they’re poor. They also said that annoying kids were bullied. “The way a kid acts sometimes, being annoying” is a reason they are bullied often.

Eighth Graders’ Responses:

Each member of the eighth grade group knew at least one student who was bullied on a daily basis. One female student commented, “We all know the same kids that are bullied, our school’s not that big.” The group concurred that probably about five students in the eighth grade were continual targets of bullying. Their explanation for the bullying centered on a student’s appearance, “the way they dress or look,” “not a lot of friends”, or having a reserved and quiet personality. One female student said, “It is really the way they act, if your different and quiet then they {the bullies} know you’ll be easy to say things to because they know you won’t say anything back.” They too said annoying, loud, and obnoxious students were bullied. One male student simply said, “Annoying people are bullied.”

Each group was very insistent that students who annoy other students are bullied. The students perceived that the bullied students’ lack of social skills and

inappropriate actions often force them into the target circle of a bully. The students all said these kids almost deserve the behaviors inflicted upon them because they drive everyone crazy and don't know when or how to stop bothering people. The groups were also in agreement that students who don't have a lot of money and therefore, can't dress nicely are bullied. Appearance in middle school is a big deal.

Discussion Question 3: Do you know students who bully other students often? Why?

Sixth Graders' Responses:

Each member of the group said that they knew of one or two students who would be considered a real bully. One male student said, "I think it {the number of bullies} is a small number. One kid is new, only here a couple of months in the school, and I think he is trying to be cool. Everyone laughs and join in {bullying} with him." The students in the group didn't really know why some kids become bullies. They seemed truly baffled to the reasons why other kids would want to hurt their peers. The group decided it was due to problems at home or kids that were attention seekers. One female student said, "Some bullies just want attention."

Seventh Graders' Responses:

The seventh graders each knew of at least two bullies. The group said the number of male verses female bullies was equivalent. The students in the group thought kids bullied to be cool, show-off, or get a reaction from their peers. One male student thought, "Bullies think it is cool to pick on other people to make themselves feel better." They linked bullying to immaturity

and said that insecurity was definitely a factor for why kids bully. One female student said, "Many bullies are very immature and they think they are better than everyone else and that everyone else is on their side."

Eighth Graders' Responses:

All the eighth graders said they knew of at least three bullies. One male student said he knew ten bullies. I asked him, "What makes them a bully in your eyes?" His response, "Lots of name calling." Most of the bullies used verbal bullying to attack their targets instead of physical bullying. I asked the group, "Do you know of any school yard bullies that beat people up and steal their lunch money?" The students all laughed and told me, "That is from the 40's, it doesn't really happen anymore." The students did say there were several clusters of "mean girls," or girls that used relational bullying to exclude or make other students feel inferior. One male student commented, "They {the mean girls} are shallow and think they're better because they have a lot of money." Two girls stuck up for the "mean girls" and asked the boy if he had ever had a personal relationship with any of them, "they are not mean girls." The group thought poor home life might be a contributing factor to bullying behavior. One student said, "You can just tell by looking at this girl that her home life isn't good and comments she makes leads me to think that home isn't good." The students in the group also agreed that many kids like to make themselves feel better or elevate their own self-esteem by picking on

other people. One female student shared, "Bullying makes them feel better, more superior, and it's like their security blanket."

The students who participated in the focus group interviews indicated that they all knew bullies within the school and each group shared that they were probably all thinking about the same few bullies. Interesting, without saying names, the students in each group knew who the bullies in their grade level. The students hypothesized that these bullies had problems at home and were unhappy deep down. Bullies like attention and may not get enough attention at home from their parents or siblings. One sixth grader shared, "I know one bully; I think it is troubles at home because his mom is sick and he is really mean to other kids." The students discussed that the bully's behavior was like a "security blanket," as described by an eighth grader. By acting out and putting other students down a bully can mask their own issues and problems. One seventh grader said, "Bullies are both good and bad students, but they are sneaky so the teachers don't know they are bullies. There is no classification {of bullies}, but most are insecure."

Discussion Question 4: Have you witnessed students, teachers, or staff displaying respectful and tolerant actions to others?

Sixth Graders' Responses:

Each student present said that they had witnessed respectful actions from both students and teachers. One male student expressed, "A lot of times I have seen other people hold doors for other people when they are carrying a two feet

stack of books.” They mentioned seeing “students help carry other students’ stuff to the next class” or holding doors open. One female student shared, “I saw someone fall on the steps and people stopped to help her pick up her stuff.” The said they often heard teachers give complements to students and that they felt there were many caring teachers in the middle school. One student said that the middle school “teachers will help students with their questions or problems.”

Seventh Graders’ Responses:

The seventh graders shared the same types of actions as the sixth graders. One female student admitted, “Everyone knows I try to carry too much, numerous times I have dropped my stuff in the hallway and all these kids flock to me to help me pick up my stuff.” One female student’s experience, “I tripped up the stairs and someone offered a hand to help me, it was a girl that wasn’t my friend.” The seventh graders also said they felt the teachers were patient and willing to help students achieve. One male student said, “There are teachers that ask you to stay after to try and get your grade up.” Another female student added, “They {good teachers} encourage you to work harder and when you’re not feeling that well – they notice.” However, the seventh grade group discussed some teachers that displayed disrespectful actions. One student said, “There are a lot more teachers than people think that can be bullies to students, but for the most part they are respectful.”

Eighth Graders' Responses:

All of the eighth graders again echoed the same responses as the sixth and seventh graders. They added that students and teachers are also willing to help each other open lockers. One female student, an original member of BE PROUD, said, "My locker was super jammed and a teacher came by and stopped to help me. When she couldn't open the locker, she called a custodian for me." Two students, one female and one male, discussed chain reactions, "Like smiling or saying hi, I just can't walk by without acknowledging someone in the hallway."

All three focus groups easily shared respectful actions that they had witnessed during the school year. Without hesitation, every student who participated in the focus group interviews could name a specific incidence where a kind gesture had been shared. The students agreed that the middle school has many positive characteristics and that on a daily basis kindness is spread throughout the school community.

The seventh graders diverged into a conversation about disrespectful teachers. However, the seventh grade group concluded that overall most teachers are respectful. In the words of a seventh grade girl, "Most teachers are nice and respectful, but there are a couple who are pretty rough."

Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire Description

The 2008 Olweus BVQ was administered on the same day, at the end of April, throughout the entire middle school during first period. All homeroom teachers were provided with specific, detailed instructions (see Appendix D) for administering the questionnaire. Homeroom teachers read the 56 questions aloud to all students. Students in each classroom had 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire. All questions were presented in a multiple-choice format. Students recorded their letter responses on a separate numbered answer sheet (see Appendix) D. Each homeroom teacher collected the questionnaires from his or her classroom and returned completed questionnaires to a labeled box in the main office. The calculations for the 2007 and 2008 BVQ were based on the number of students that responded to each item. By using the number of students who took the questionnaire at each grade level, their responses to each letter choice was then converted into a percentage. Data from both the 2007 BVQ and 2008 BVQ was compiled by the Olweus Committee and presented in completed tabulated packets.

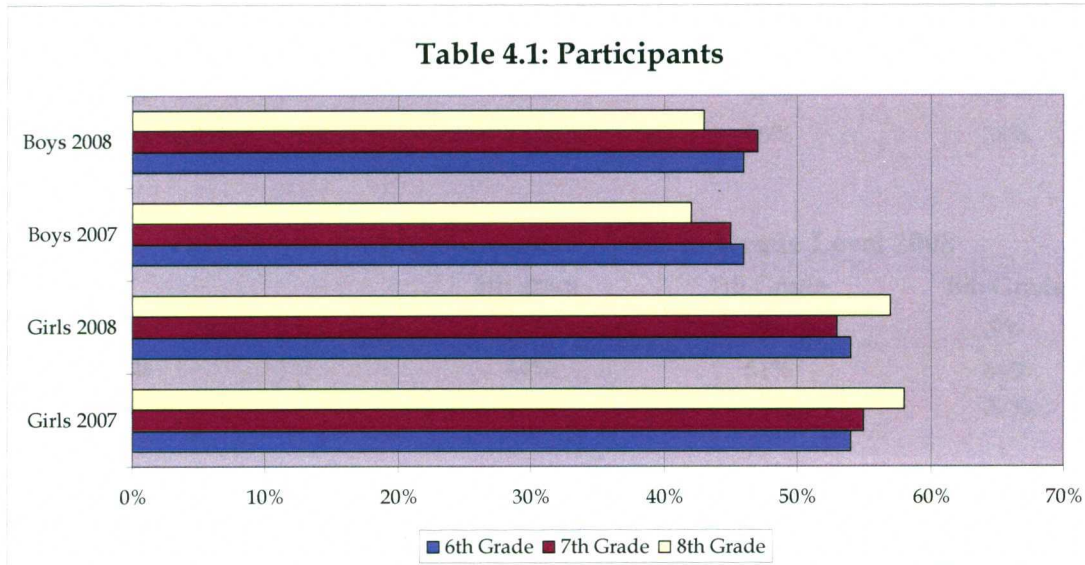
The purpose of the 2008 posttest questionnaire was to gather information from the students about their perceptions of bullying and reevaluate the bullying situation one year into the program. The committee was curious to learn how, if at all, the environment and climate of the school has improved. My purpose for comparing the pre (2007) and post (2008) test data was to determine how the implementation of the Olweus Bully Prevention Program impacted students' responses on the questionnaire and if their awareness levels increased due to training and class lessons. All students

in the middle school, grades six, seven, and eight, received at least five individual class lessons. The entire school participated in a pep rally and an assembly. Multiple activities were planned for students to partake in after school as well.

I selected eight questions for comparison. I displayed information from both questionnaires on tables and charts (see below). Three questions helped me narrow the data to examine the reported numbers of physical, relational, and verbal bullying incidents. Two other questions focused on which gender is more likely to bully their peers and if they bully alone or in groups. Finally, three questions provided insight into the empathy bystanders have for their bullied peers. Empathy is only the first part of the equation, I was curious to learn if students were willing to “step-in” and intervene when they witness their peers being bullied.

Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire Findings

Item 2: Are you a boy or a girl?



	Girls 2007	Girls 2008	Boys 2007	Boys 2008
6th Grade	54%	54%	46%	46%
7th Grade	55%	53%	45%	47%
8th Grade	58%	57%	42%	43%

The percentages of males and females completing the questionnaires were similar for both years. Table 4.1: Participants shows that approximately 10 percent more females per grade level than males attend our middle school. The school's average female population was 55 percent and the male average was 45 percent.

In 2007, 315 female and 253 male students took the questionnaire. In 2008, 263 females and 217 male students took the questionnaire.

Item 3: How many good friends do you have in your class(es)?

Table 4.2a: Number of Good Friends in Grade Level 2007

	6th grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
0 - 1 Friend	9%	2%	7%
2 - 5 Friends	43%	32%	55%
6 or more Friends	48%	66%	38%

Table 4.2b: Number of Good Friends in Grade Level 2008

	6th grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
0 - 1 Friend	7%	7%	9%
2 - 5 Friends	44%	61%	64%
6 or more Friends	49%	32%	27%

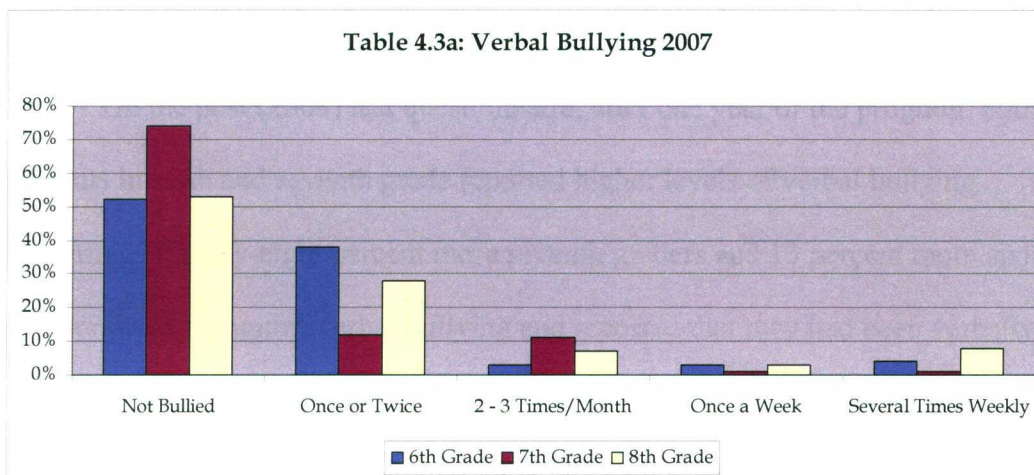
Table 4.2: Number of Good Friends in Grade Level illustrates that both years less than 10 percent of the students reported that they had one friend or less.

Disaggregating the data further shows that in 2007, three students reported having no close friends and in 2008, eight students claimed to have zero close friends. In 2008, eight percent, or 36 students reported having one or no good friends. There was little variance among the grade levels that reflected a consistency of students lacking friendships within the middle school. These students possess the highest risk of becoming serious targets for bullying behaviors. This data supports my focus group findings. One male sixth grader said, "I think kids that don't have a group or any real friends get bullied the most." When I asked the eighth graders, "Why do kids get bullied? A male student responded, "They {bullied kids} don't have a lot of friends." Having no friend support leaves students vulnerable and open for attacks by bullies.

Sixth graders reported similar data both years, approximately 45 percent of

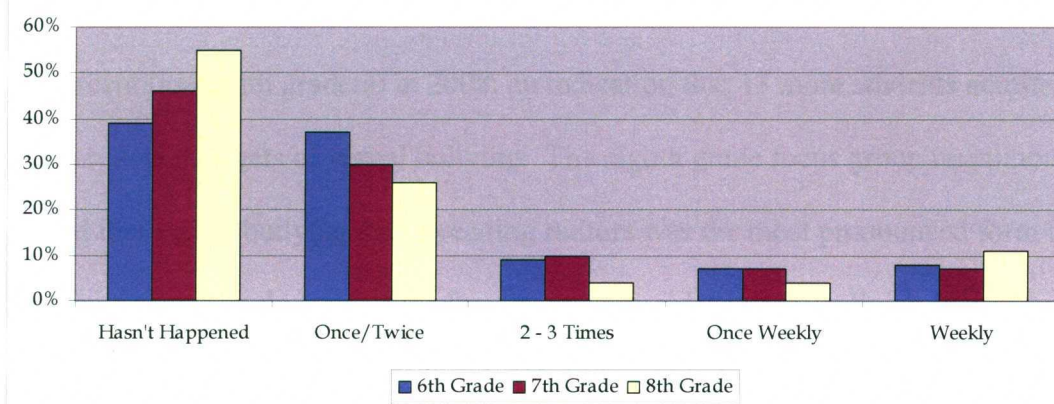
students have 2-5 friends and 45 percent have 6 or more friends. Forty-four percent of seventh graders reported having 2-5 friends in 2007 when they were sixth graders, in 2008 that percentage increased to 61 percent of students having 2-5 friends with 32 percent having more than 6 friends. This data corresponds with the seventh grade students' discussion from the focus group interview; each year students become more comfortable in the middle school and "click" with new friends. Sixty-six percent of eighth grade students had reported having 6 or more friends in 2007 as seventh graders. By eighth grade, 27 percent of those same students reported 6 or more friends and most students reported having 2-5 friends.

Item 5: I was called mean names, was made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way?



	Not Bullied	Once or Twice	2 – 3 Times a Month	Once a Week	Weekly
6th Grade	52%	38%	3%	3%	4%
7th Grade	74%	12%	11%	1%	1%
8th Grade	53%	28%	7%	3%	8%

Table 4.3b: Verbal Bullying 2008

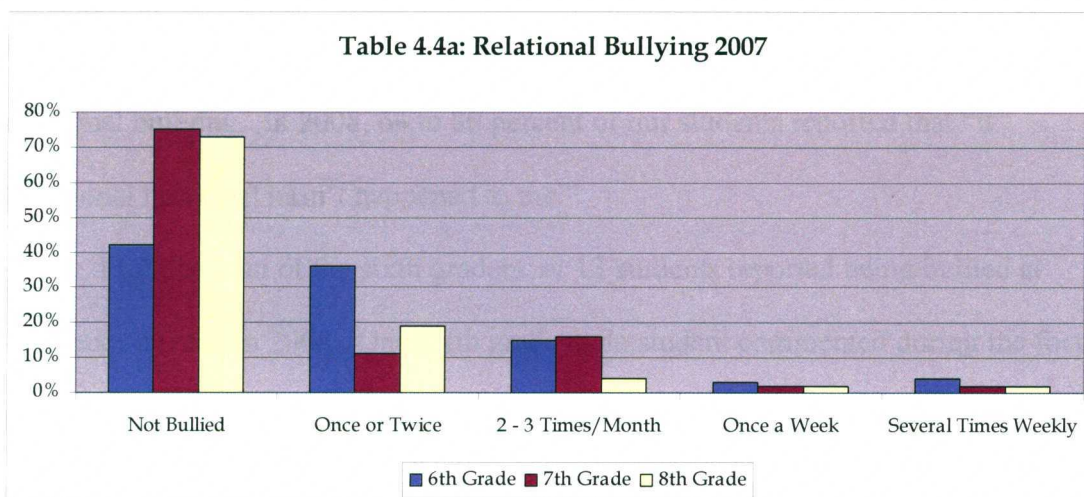


	Not Bullied	Once or Twice	2 - 3 Times a Month	Once a Week	Weekly
6th Grade	39%	37%	9%	7%	8%
7th Grade	46%	30%	10%	7%	7%
8th Grade	55%	26%	4%	4%	11%

On the post (2008) test questionnaire, after one year of the program, both students in sixth and seventh grade reported higher levels of verbal bullying occurring. Twenty-eight percent more seventh graders and 13 percent more sixth graders could recognize verbal bullying and reported that they had been verbally bullied by their peers on the questionnaire. Comparing Table 4.3a: Verbal Bullying 2007 to Table 4.3b: Verbal Bullying 2008, the results show a considerable increase in the number of students reporting being verbally bullied once a week and several times a week. Verbal bullying was the most dominate type of bullying experienced by the students in our middle school. Twenty-three percent, or 108 students reported being verbally bullied on a monthly basis.

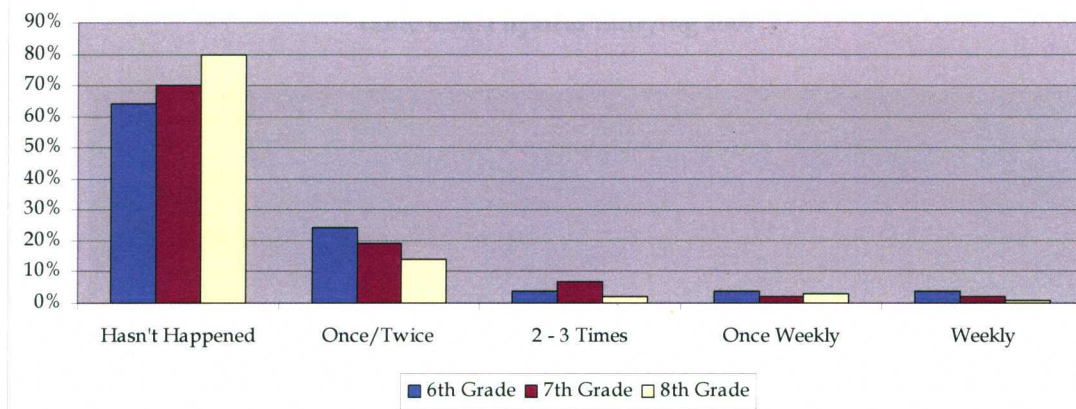
Only the eighth grade percentages remained consistent for the overall number of students experiencing verbally bullying. However, on the 2007 BVQ, 1 percent of seventh grade students reported being bullied several times a week which increased to 11 percent (as eighth graders) in 2008; an indication that 13 more students admitted to being constant targets of verbal bullying. The eighth grade focus group unanimously agreed that verbal bullying and spreading rumors was the most pronounced form of bullying in their grade level. One female student said, “Verbal bullying is hard to prove.” Another eighth grade girl said, “Yea, it {verbal bullying} is under the breath comments that goes on during class.”

Item 6: Other students left me out of things on purpose, excluded me from their group of friends or completely ignored me.



	Not Bullied	Once or Twice	2 - 3 Times a Month	Once a Week	Weekly
6th Grade	42%	36%	15%	3%	4%
7th Grade	75%	11%	16%	2%	2%
8th Grade	73%	19%	4%	2%	2%

Table 4.4b: Relational Bullying 2008



	Not Bullied	Once or Twice	2 - 3 Times a month	Once a Week	Weekly
6th Grade	64%	24%	4%	4%	4%
7th Grade	70%	19%	7%	2%	2%
8th Grade	80%	14%	2%	3%	1%

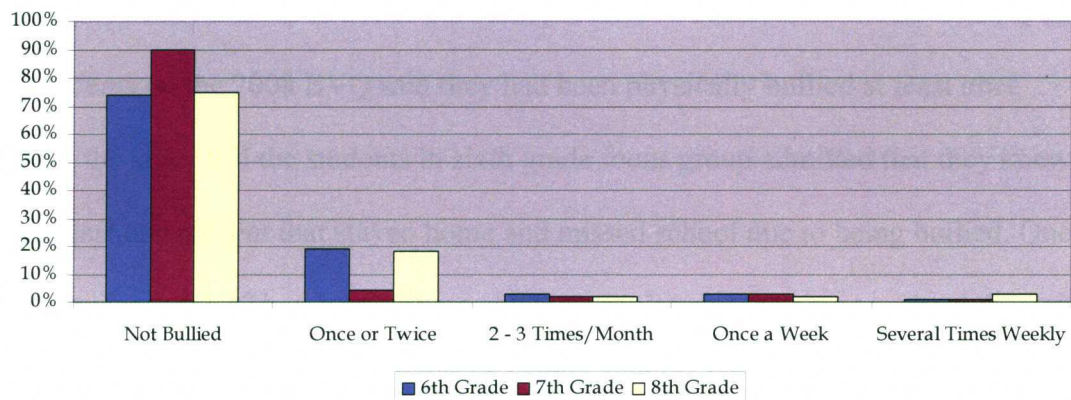
According to Table 4.4a: Relational Bullying 2007 and Table 4.4b: Relational Bullying 2008, the majority of our middle school students claimed not to suffer from relational bullying. In 2008, 64 to 80 percent of our students reported that “it [relational bullying] hasn’t happened to me.”

Eight percent of the sixth graders, or 13 students reported being bullied at least once a week in 2008. One sixth grade male student commented during the focus group, “I think the more popular kids get bullied a lot, but by each other.”

One seventh grade female student shared during the focus group interview, “It is more bullying among friends, whenever I hear one of my friends talking about another one of my friends in a non-flattering kind of way, I will say that I like that person and I don’t think that is one of their flaws.

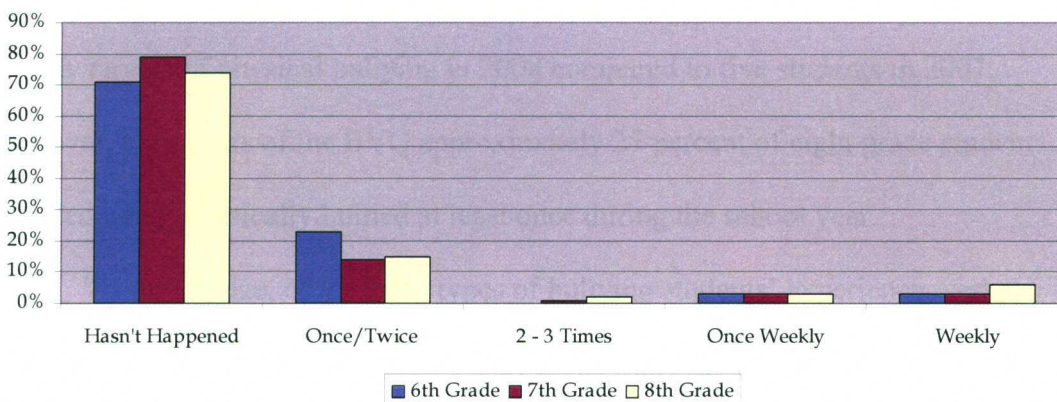
Item 7: I was hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors.

Table 4.5a: Physical Bullying 2007



	Not Bullied	Once or Twice	2 - 3 Times/Month	Once a Week	Weekly
6th Grade	74%	19%	3%	3%	1%
7th Grade	90%	4%	2%	3%	1%
8th Grade	75%	18%	2%	2%	3%

Table 4.5b: Physical Bullying 2008



	Not Bullied	Once/Twice	2 - 3 Times	Once Weekly	Weekly
6th Grade	71%	23%	0%	3%	3%
7th Grade	79%	14%	1%	3%	3%
8th Grade	74%	15%	2%	3%	6%

On average, 75 percent of students in all three grade levels did not report being physically bullied in 2008. As sixth graders, 50 students on the 2007 BVQ and 47 students on the 2008 BVQ said they had been physically bullied at least once during the year. All the students in sixth grade focus group admitted that they knew of at least one student that stayed home and missed school due to being bullied. One male student said, "They hear rumors and then don't want to come to school the next day because they don't want to get beat-up."

Between 2007 and 2008, the percentage of eighth graders reporting weekly physical bullying doubled. After discussing physical bullying with the assistant principal and dean of students, I can understand how these numbers align. According to our administration, eighth grade students are involved in more physical altercations than both sixth and seventh grade students. The data presented in Table 4.5b: Physical Bullying indicates that nine eighth grade students maintained they were weekly targets of physical bullying in 2008 compared to five students in 2007. However, both years of the BVQ approximately 25 percent of eighth grade students reported being physically bullied at least once during the school year.

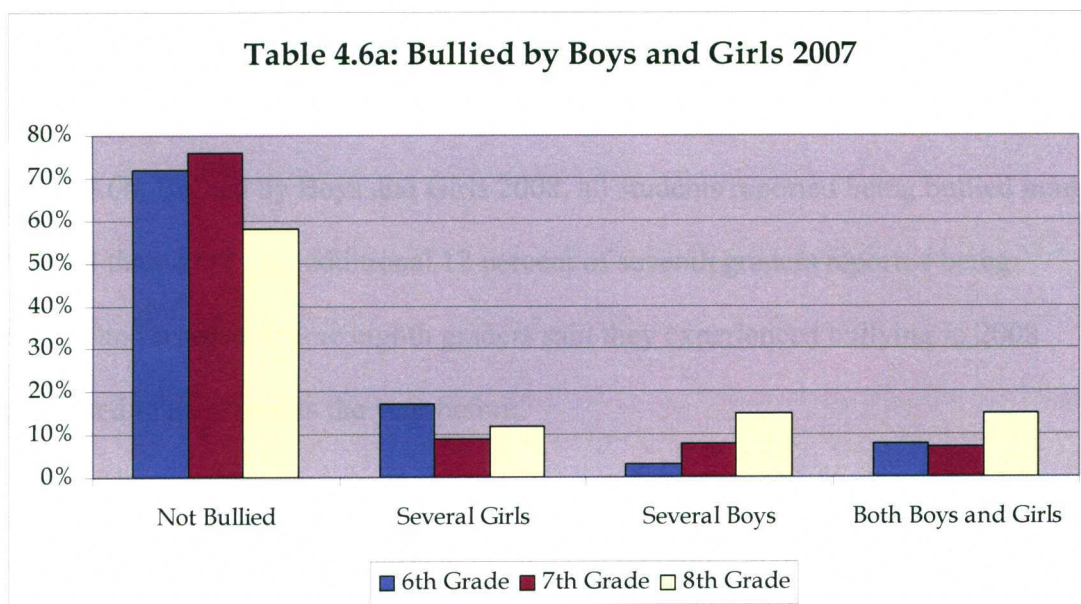
To summarize, of the three types of bullying students' experience, verbal bullying accounted for a larger percentage than relational and physical bullying combined. On the 2008 questionnaire, 64 percent of middle school students said they had been recipients of verbal bullying and 23 percent or 108 students asserted they were targets of verbal bullying several times a month. In 2007, 38 students, or seven percent said they were verbally bullied multiple times a week. In 2008, 70 students or

15 percent of the student population reported weekly verbal abuse. The statistics of students reporting being verbally bullied on a weekly basis doubled from 2007 to 2008.

Recognition of physical bullying also increased 7 percent over the course of a school year. In 2007, 28 students reported that they experienced physical bullying on a weekly basis and in 2008 that number doubled to 58 students.

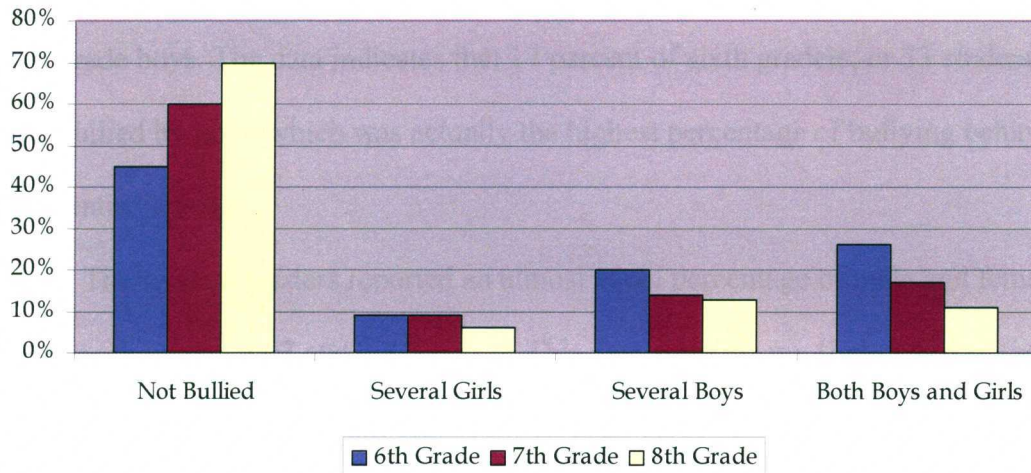
Relational bullying was cited by students as the type of bullying that occurred the least in our middle school. On both questionnaires, approximately 8 percent of students said they were excluded or suffered from relational bullying by their peers several times a week.

Item 15: Have you been bullied by boys or girls?



	Not Bullied	Several Girls	Several Boys	Both Boys and Girls
6th Grade	72%	17%	3%	8%
7th Grade	76%	9%	8%	7%
8th Grade	58%	12%	15%	15%

Table 4.6b: Bullied by Boys and Girls 2008



	Not Bullied	Several Girls	Several Boys	Both Boys and Girls
6th Grade	45%	9%	20%	26%
7th Grade	60%	9%	14%	17%
8th Grade	70%	6%	13%	11%

According to the data from Table 4.6a: Bullied by Boys and Girls 2007 and Table 4.6b: Bullied by Boys and Girls 2008, all students reported being bullied more in 2008 than 2007. An additional 12 percent of seventh graders reported being bullied and 6 percent more eighth graders said they experienced bullying in 2008 compared to their results the year before.

There was an obvious increase in the number of reported bullying behaviors committed by both boys and girls in 2008. The incoming sixth graders asserted that 26 percent or 42 students were bullied by both boys and girls. The seventh graders reported 10 percent more bullying behaviors. Only the eighth graders reported a decrease in being bullied.

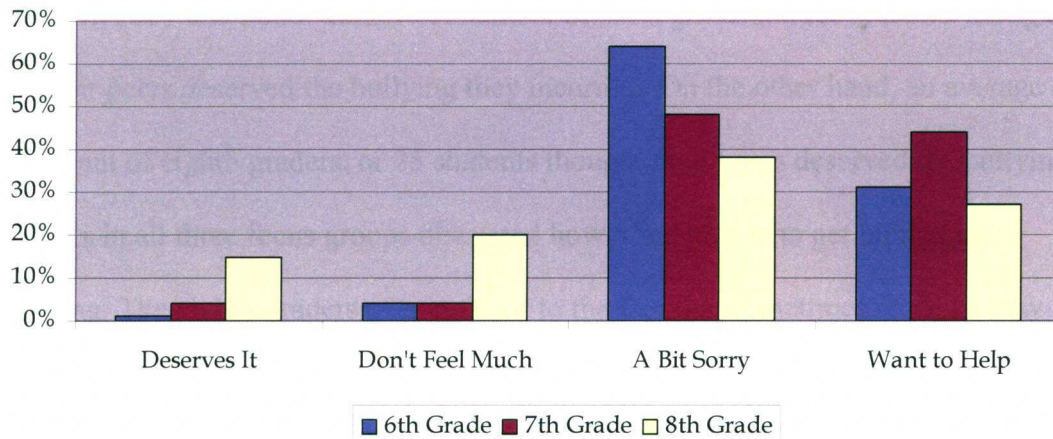
The data presented in Table 4.6a: Bullied by Boys and Girls 2007 illustrates that sixth grade girls were involved in bullying situations, 14 percent more often than sixth grade boys. The data indicates that 17 percent of sixth graders, or 33 students, were bullied by girls, which was actually the highest percentage of bullying behaviors in the entire school.

The seventh graders reported an almost equal percentage of male and female bullies both on the 2007 and 2008 BVQs. This data supports my findings from the seventh grade focus group. All students who participated in the group said that there was an “even number of boys and girls that are bullies in seventh grade.” In eighth grade, more male students, 15 percent, bullied their peers than female students. During the eighth grade focus group, one female student shared, “Generally girls have just matured more.”

The data from Table 4.6b: Bullied by Boys and Girls 2008 highlights the fact that 3 percent of sixth grade students were bullied boys in 2007, a figure that increased to 14 percent in 2008 when the students were seventh graders. The increase experienced by eighth grade boys was not as significant, rising 5 percent from 2007 to 2008. All three grade levels reported a decrease in female bullying. The seventh graders had the most significant decrease in female bullying, after one year of the OBPP, their reported bullying behaviors was narrowed from 17 percent as sixth graders to 9 percent in seventh grade. In sixth grade, 33 students reported being bullied by girls on the 2007 BVQ compared to 16 seventh grade students who reported being bullied by girls on the 2008 BVQ just one year later. The eighth grade girls reported behaviors decreased from 9 percent to 6 percent.

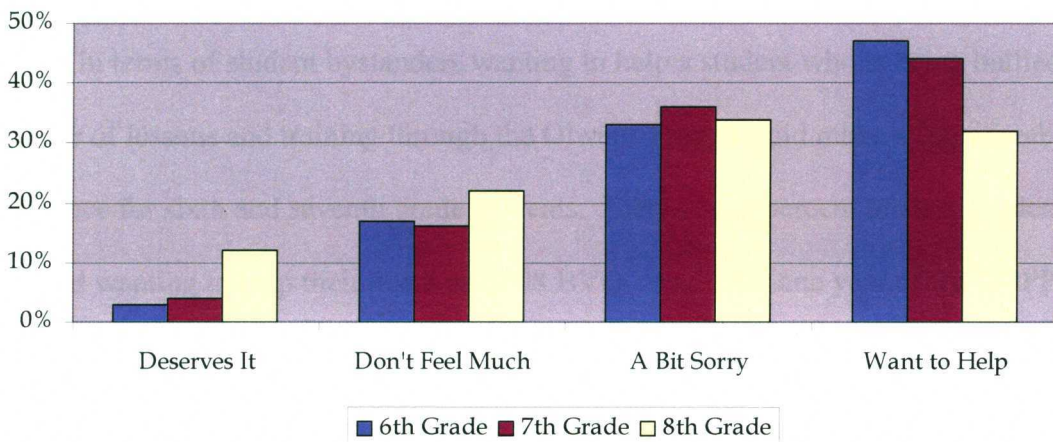
Item 40: When you see a student your age being bullied at school, what do you feel or think?

**Table 4.7a: Thoughts or Feelings of Students Being Bullied
2007**



	Deserves It	Don't Feel Much	A Bit Sorry	Want to Help
6th Grade	1%	4%	64%	31%
7th Grade	4%	4%	48%	44%
8th Grade	15%	20%	38%	27%

**Table 4.7b: Thoughts or Feelings of Students Being
Bullied 2008**



	Deserves It	Don't Feel Much	A Bit Sorry	Want to Help
6th Grade	3%	17%	33%	47%
7th Grade	4%	16%	36%	44%
8th Grade	17%	22%	34%	32%

In 2007 and 2008, the fewest number of sixth graders, three students thought that their peers deserved the bullying they incurred. On the other hand, an average of 16 percent of eighth graders, or 25 students thought their peers deserved the bullying. Students in all three focus groups discussed how often kids who get bullied are annoying. The eighth graders even pointed to the fact that sometimes students may even “deserve” the wrath they incur because they are so annoying. This data corresponds to the discussions I had with the focus groups. Many sixth grade students are timid and scared of the older students. During the sixth grade focus group, one male student shared, “I hate walking down the hall, especially in the morning before school, because the older kids try to trip us or push us into lockers.” Many sixth graders have shared their fear of walking down the hallways near older students’ lockers with me and are frustrated because they do not know their names to report them.

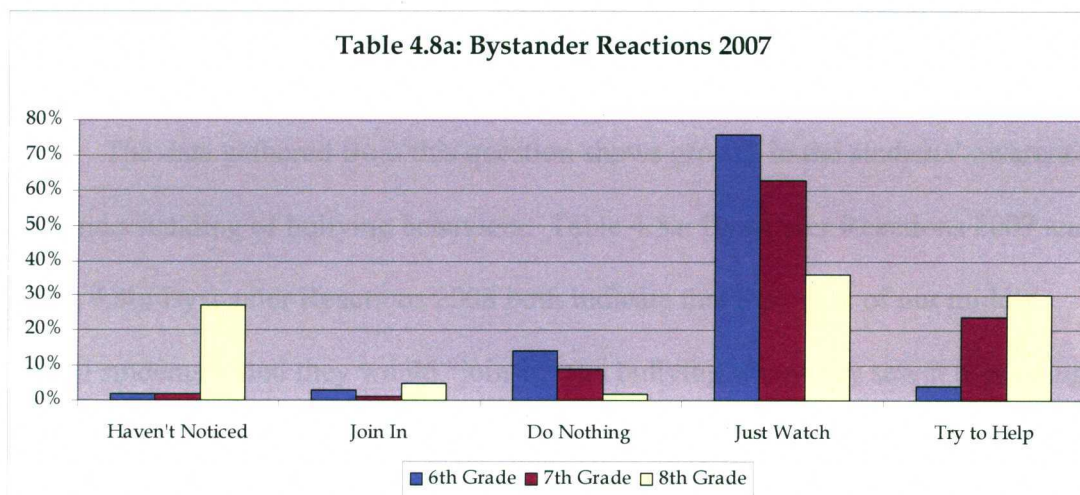
In terms of student bystanders wanting to help a student who is being bullied, the year of lessons and training through the Olweus Program did make a considerable difference for sixth and seventh grade students. Forty-seven percent of sixth graders reported wanting to help their peers on 2008 BVQ. And after one year of the OBPP, 13 percent more seventh graders wanted to take action and help stop the bullying than they had reported in 2007. One seventh grade girl shared her strategy to intervene in

bullying situations. During our focus group she explained, “If I see that someone is getting picked on, I’ll try and take them away from the situation and say something like –someone is waiting for you or a teacher wants to talk to you.” The eighth grade data shows that there was a 12 percent decrease in the number of students who would help. More eighth graders thought their peers either “deserved it” {the bullying} or they “didn’t feel much” and could ignore the bullying. These statistics align with the idea that eighth graders believe that many students bring the bullying on themselves; therefore, bystanders are not as willing to get involved in the situation.

The positive news presented within the data, Table 4.7a: Thoughts or Feelings of Students Being Bullied 2007 and Table 4.7b: Thought or Feelings of Students Being Bullied 2008, shows that in 2007, an average of 50 percent of our middle school students felt sorry for the target, but 34 percent had the actual confidence and knowledge to try and help stop the bullying situation. In 2008, 34 percent of bystanders felt bad for the bullying target, and 41 percent were willing to try and help the target. Forty-one percent is approximately 200 students in our building. It appears that after one year of the Olweus Bully Prevention Program more students possessed a solid knowledge base of effective strategies and felt confident that they could intervene in bullying situations. This data correlates to my findings from the focus group interviews. Eighty-six percent or 18 of 21 students were able to specifically name the strategy they would employ if they witnessed a bullying incident.

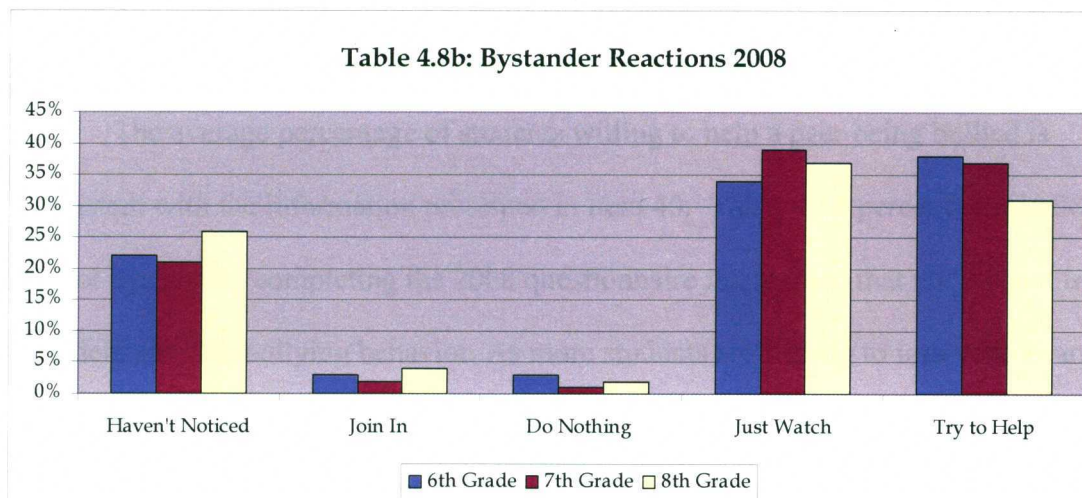
Item 54: How do you usually react if you see or understand that a student your age is being bullied by other student(s)?

Table 4.8a: Bystander Reactions 2007



	Haven't Noticed	Join In	Do Nothing	Just Watch	Try to Help
6 th Grade	2%	3%	14%	76%	4%
7 th Grade	2%	1%	9%	63%	24%
8 th Grade	27%	5%	2%	36%	30%

Table 4.8b: Bystander Reactions 2008



	Haven't Noticed	Join In	Do Nothing	Just Watch	Try to Help
6th Grade	22%	3%	3%	34%	38%
7th Grade	21%	2%	1%	39%	37%
8th Grade	26%	4%	2%	37%	31%

The data gathered from this question shows growth in the students' awareness and understanding of bullying behaviors. Table 4.8a: Bystander Reactions 2007 and Table 4.8b: Bystander Reactions 2008 both indicate that 9 percent of our middle school students stated they would "join-in" the bullying when they saw it happening. In 2007, 48 students or eight percent of the student population admitted to "doing nothing" when they witnessed bullying. However, in 2008, that number decreased to 6 percent or 10 students who ignored the situation. Along the same lines, 76 percent, 146 sixth graders in 2007 said they "just watched" other students being bullied, but by 2008 as seventh graders that number narrowed to 39 percent, or 69 bystanders watching and not intervening. One hundred twenty seventh graders, 63 percent "just watched" bullying in 2007; as eighth graders that number decreased to 53 students or 37 percent as eighth graders in 2008.

The average percentage of students willing to help a peer being bullied is consistent with the information presented in item 40. Thirty-five percent of middle school bystanders completing the 2008 questionnaire maintained that they would try and help stop the bullying behavior. As more students are willing to intervene in an attempt to stop their peers from being bullied the greater the positive change will be in our school. One major goal of the Olweus Bully Prevention Program is to swing the tide from students that "join-in" to students that take action (Olweus, 1999).

Chapter 5: Summary, Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Summary

I designed this research project to look more closely at the middle school in which I teach and determine what impact a national anti-bullying program had on our school's environment and the student's awareness of bullying behaviors, and their responses to bullying incidents. As I indicated previously, our school piloted the Olweus Bully Prevention Program (OBPP) in the spring of 2007. A committee of dedicated teachers, staff, and administrators met for a three day implementation workshop and continued to meet throughout the summer to kick-off the program in the fall of the 2007-2008 school year.

The Olweus committee facilitated numerous school-wide activities. The group worked tirelessly to promote positive student behaviors through use of posters, class lessons, the creation of a student group, a student pep-rally, community activity nights, parent education, and teacher and student trainings. The committee met weekly to fully implement the OBPP and provide follow-through for the initiative. The definition of bullying was spelled out in student agendas and posted in every classroom. All middle school students signed a pledge not to bully and were exposed to multiple bullying lessons taught by the teachers in our school. The school even created a motto to use when students saw their peers bullying or acting inappropriately, "We don't do that here at Great Middle School," it was not uncommon to hear students saying the motto in the hallways. Even if they were

joking around, they knew the slogan and what behaviors would be deemed inappropriate.

The program faced opposition from faculty and some teachers were resistant to teach the anti-bullying or character education lesson plans. Many of these teachers were frustrated with our status as a SINI school and the constant scrutiny we endure for our math and ELA scores. It was difficult to implement a new program into a school under a new administration, state mandates, and serious student behavior concerns. However, these are just a few of the reasons I passionately believed that we needed a solid character education program. Our school's academic environment was most definitely impacted by the negative student behavior and a large constituency of the faculty and staff felt the same felt that a character education program was necessary. Our committee wanted to improve the learning environment by teaching students what bullying looks, feels, and sounds like and model appropriate behaviors to enable our students to make better choices.

Discussion

Sixth Grade

I believe that sixth graders hold the key to changing the climate within the school building. Using the Olweus Bully Prevention Program to educate students about bullying, effective strategies, and appropriate behaviors, the sixth graders showed the greatest empathy and therefore the most potential for change. Bauer et al (2007) found that "sixth graders were more likely to feel sorry and want to help

victims" (p.266). Smith, Ananiadou, and Cowie (2003) wrote, "Younger children more willing accept teacher authority and curriculum activities and school policies that reflect teacher influence" (p.596). Coming from the elementary school setting, the sixth graders can remember an atmosphere where bullying was unacceptable.

Sixth graders in the focus group defined bullying as hurtful. In 2008, after a year of the OBPP, 76 students reported that they wanted to help their bullied peers and 62 students said they would try to help a student being bullied. Six of seven students in the focus group said they would intervene in a bullying situation. This data shows that training and teaching strategies to combat bullying can empower bystanders to take action.

Additionally, the sixth graders were the most willing to report all three types of bullying. Research has shown that bullying peaks in middle school, specifically in the 11-12 year old age group (Zeigler & Rosenstein-Manner, 1991). Sixty-one percent, or 99 sixth graders reported verbal bullying, 47 students were physically bullied, and 58 were targets of relational bullying. Many of the sixth graders in the focus group viewed the bully report form and bully boxes as to tool they could use to their advantage. The sixth graders were most likely to admit to using the report form.

Seventh Grade

The seventh graders seemed to possess the characteristics of being the infamous "middle child." Being situated between the youngest students and oldest students in the school, the seventh graders weren't quite sure where they fit in. Should

they use the bully report forms and work to ameliorate bullying? Or are the bully report forms for babies and bullying is just part of the middle school? The students in the focus group seemed divided and unsure of their stance on bullying.

The seventh grade students in the focus group could name the types of bullying and defined bullying as picking on or making fun of other students. Four of seven students said that they would intervene in a bullying situation. After one year of the OBPP, 57 more seventh graders reported that they would try to help a peer being bullied. Data taken from the 2007 and 2008 BVQs indicated that as sixth graders 27 students would have just watched their peers being bullied and “do nothing” to help, but as seventh graders one percent, only two students, reported that they would not help a peer in need.

However, the seventh graders in the focus group had negative reactions to the bully report form and bully boxes for reporting purposes. One male student said, “I seriously don’t think that the Bully Box works. What I have seen and heard is people just take bully forms and fakely write them out or they put something stupid down, so I don’t think they are working.” Another male student said, “I think we should get rid of the bully boxes because it is a waste of paper!” Other students shared their feelings that their peers just think of the report forms as a joke and kids who use them to report bullying are teased. However, data from the school’s bully report log shows that 68 bully report forms were turned in by seventh grade students over the course of the school year. Therefore, some students are using the report forms and these

students need support and the option to report bullying in a method they feel comfortable with.

Eighth Grade

The eighth graders in the focus group could easily define and identify bullying behaviors. They could articulate their feelings and beliefs about bullying in a clear fashion. The students left an impression on me that eighth grade students, most of them anyway, are above bullying. Through our discussions the students insinuated that most of the bullying in the middle school was in the lower grades and that by eighth grade they have more important things to worry about. On the 2007 BVQ, as seventh graders, 84 students reported they wanted to help their bullied peers. As eighth graders, that number decreased to 45 students that would come to the aid of a bullied peer. As seventh graders, these students were more willing to “put up” with and want to help bullied students. Another example of this laissez faire attitude is illustrated in the results from item 40 dealing with empathy. In 2007, eight students reported that they “don’t feel much when they witness a bullying incident,” as eighth graders that number increased to 31 students who lack empathy for their bullied peers. More surprising, an average of 16 percent, or 26 eighth graders actually believe the targets “deserve the bullying.”

The idea that some students believe their peers deserve to be bullied is alarming. The focus group students discussed “annoying” students as typical students who deserve to be bullied because they are irritating. After three years together, three

long years of defending someone who continues to drive others crazy, does the exasperating factor impact their decision to intervene in a bullying situation? I believe that as adolescents mature over the course of their middle school years, their acceptance and tolerance for immaturity decreases. During the eighth grade focus group, one student summarized their feelings quite well, "I just keep out of it."

Conclusions

Student Awareness Increases

After one year of the Olweus Bully Prevention Program (OBPP) I can say with certainty that the students' awareness of bullying increased and their sensitivity to bullying behaviors intensified. Every student who participated in the focus group interviews attempted to provide the definition of bullying. Some students' definitions were more descriptive and detailed than others, but every participant's answer was appropriate and accurately described bullying.

In addition to being able to define bullying, nineteen of twenty-one students, or 90 percent of the group could specifically name a strategy that could be used to intervene in bullying incidents. One hundred percent of the strategies the focus group students shared were strategies taught during the OBPP lessons. Nine students, 43 percent, described more than one strategy that they would employ upon witnessing a bullying situation. For example, a seventh grade female student shared, "If I see that someone is getting picked on, I'll try to take them away from the situation and say, 'Someone is waiting for you or a teacher wants to talk to you.'"

The increase in reported bullying behaviors from the 2007 pre to the 2008 post-BVQ questionnaires leads me to believe that the students' awareness from the Olweus Bully Prevention Program (OBPP) education impacted these results. In 2007, 31 percent, or 177 middle school students, reported being bullied. In 2008, after one year of the program, 202 students, or 42 percent of the student population reported being bullied.

This data does not prove that the OBPP positively impacted the bullying issue in our school, or that students effectively used the strategies they discussed, but it does illustrate that students were familiar with bullying and had appropriate strategies in their tool box.

Student Response to Bullying Situations

My initial hope was that the Olweus Bully Prevention Program (OBPP) would reduce the number of bullying incidents in our school. However, after one year of the program, the post (2008) Bully/Victim Questionnaire (BVQ) results indicated that more students reported being involved in bullying situations. The OBPP increased student awareness, which likely impacted students' ability to identify and thus report bullying behaviors.

The data indicates there was an increase in bystanders who responded when witnessing bullying situations. The fact that more students reported coming to the aid of their bullied peers is a positive effect of heightened student awareness. In 2007, the pre-BVQ confirmed that 381 students would "just watch" or "do nothing" and not

intervene in a bullying situation. In 2008, the post-BVQ, showed that number decreased to 187 kids that would “just watch” or “do nothing” as they observed a bullying situation unfold. This data indicates that more students took action and were willing to intervene in peer bullying incidents. In 2007, 28 percent of the students asserted that they would “try to help” a student being bullied compared to 36 percent in 2008. The 2008 post-BVQ confirmed that approximately one-third of our students, an eight percent increase from 2007, said they would try and help a target being bullied. Sixth graders were the most willing to come to the aid of a peer being bullied; along with 194 other students who previously would have “just watched” or “ignored” the situation now wanted to help. This positive data shows that by educating the students and providing them the confidence they need to intervene, power can shift away from the bully and empower the target. One way to encourage bystanders to stand-up to bullies is to continue to equip them with the necessary strategies. Students need continual encouragement and practice in dealing with bullying situations. Lodge and Frydenberg (2005) suggest teaching bystanders strategies to use when they witness bullying “promotes peaceful interventions that effect change at the peer group level” (p.333).

Another avenue I used to investigate our student responses to bullying was our school’s bully report form. Students in the focus groups had very mixed reviews on the bully report forms. Each successive grade expressed less faith in the report forms and bully boxes. Three of seven sixth graders admitted to using the report forms and five of seven said they thought the method of reporting was useful. The sixth grade

focus group spoke positively about the bully report forms. The seventh grade group had three of the seven students disclose that they had used the report form. However, two of seven students agreed that the report forms were a beneficial method of reporting bullying situations. The other five seventh graders thought the reports were not taken seriously and were turned off by the numerous fake reports written and turned in by other students. The eighth grade focus group indicated that one student, 14 percent, had used a bully report form over the course of the 2007-2008 school year. Three eighth graders said they believed that the forms could be useful, if modifications were made. The students thought more severe consequences for the bully were needed and that the bully boxes should be moved to more anonymous locations.

Interestingly, the data I collected from the school's bully report log contradicts the focus groups' perceptions of the bully report forms. During the 2007-2008 school year, 193 bully report forms were turned into the bully boxes or individual teachers. Sixth graders wrote 63 reports, seventh graders submitted 68 reports, and the eighth graders accounted for the other 60 forms. Some of our middle school students are using the bully report forms. Could some of the reports be "fake" or written in retaliation? Absolutely! Yet, the Olweus Committee's philosophy was that we would rather deal with a handful of bogus reports than overlook a bullied student that is desperate for help.

The Climate of Bullying

It is our middle school's mission to provide a caring and safe environment for our students. All of the focus group students felt that our school offers a safe learning environment. Not surprisingly, each grade level felt more comfortable and safe within the school. Each successive year in our middle school provided familiarity with the physical layout of the building, rules and procedures, and the opportunity to develop relationships with other students and teachers. However, the students in the focus groups, at all three grade levels, discussed that there were students who did not feel safe at our school and bullying was at the heart of their fear. One eighth grade male student said, "Yea, many kids are afraid because there are a lot of bullies around the school." A sixth grade male student commented, "I do know other kids that might not feel safe at school because of students that constantly badger them, shove them, and make threats at them." Bullying behavior such as name calling, taunting, and physical abuse among students has long been a disruptive factor in the educational realm and continues at a threatening level, affecting the emotional and physical safety of students (Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sayger, & Short-Camilli, 1995).

Through my research, I found that there is a correlation between feeling safe and the frequency in which students experience bullying behaviors. The focus group students validated this belief and confirmed that students who are the targets of bullying do not always feel safe at school and especially fear unsupervised areas. They spoke of corners, stairways, bathrooms and locker rooms as being scary places for students who are bullied.

Why are some kids bullied relentlessly and others never? The perceptions extracted from the focus group interviews highlighted two potential reasons for students being bullied: students without friends or annoying students are often targeted. All three focus groups discussed these same two reasons. The participants shared that they believed students without friends were often shy and quiet, or obnoxious and annoying. The 2008 post-BVQ indicated that eight percent, or 36 of our middle school students reported having only one or no friends in their classes.

Each focus group reported that annoying kids who lack appropriate social skills can be easy targets for bullying. The term “annoying” can cover a wide spectrum of behaviors; the focus groups used the word annoying to define a variety of actions that irritated the students. Surprisingly, the students in the focus groups discussed how these “annoying kids” almost deserved the bullying. They painted a scene where annoying kids are told over and over again to “stop,” “shut up,” or “leave me alone,” but they just never get the hints and continue to antagonize their peers. However, it is our job as educators to teach these students that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our school. Oliver, et al. (1994) found that many students believe that it was ok to “tease or ridicule another student when their actions were at variance with peer group norms” (p.416). Whitted and Dupper (2005) found that “in the past, bullying behaviors were sometimes described as teasing and dismissed as normal childhood behavior” (p.168). The School Violence Resource Center (2001) stressed that anti-bullying programs must dispel the belief that bullying is an acceptable part of adolescence.

I found an interesting correlation as I analyzed items 5, 6, and 7 on the 2008 post-BVQ, which measured the frequencies of bullying behaviors. The disaggregated data indicated similar percentages of students with one or no friends to the percentages of students who reported being severely bullied on a weekly basis. Nine percent, or 41 students, reported being verbally bullied every week. Eight percent, or 37 students, reported physical bullying at least three times a week and 10 percent, or 47 students, reported suffering from relational bullying at least three times a week.

I do not have concrete data to link the same eight percent, or 36 students, who claimed to have one or no friends to these percentages. However, I do find it very interesting that the percentages are so closely related. Could the students who have difficulty making or maintaining friendships be the same students experiencing relentless bullying?

Students, who lack friends, whether shy or obnoxious, become a key group to consider when discussing safety and the impact bullying has on the learning environment. These 36 students without friends most likely do not consider our school a "safe place," especially if they are the same students who reported continual bullying abuse. Research shows that students without a supportive peer group are at risk of becoming the targets of bullying. "Kids who don't fit into the honored and revered cliques are often subjected to cruel and persistent bullying" (Coloroso, 2003, p.26). I believe it is necessary to try and pinpoint students who are loners, or students that have difficulty assimilating into a group or click. In 2003, Coloroso wrote, "For

those cast outside those exclusive walls {of a click}, such a culture can mean systematic abuse, denial of equal protections, and everyday life that is frightening and/or unbearable” (p.26). What can we do as educators to help students on the outside learn appropriate social skills? We must identify students without friends and teach them social skills they may lack. It is important to involve this selected group of students in an intensive small group setting, where social skills, role play, and problem solving methods can be taught. Mahady Wilton, Craig, and Pepler (2000) found that bullied children often lack coping and problem-solving skills, which can increase the likelihood of being continually bullied. Learning how to appropriately interact with their peers could enable them to socialize and make friends. Having friends and belonging to a group decreases the risk that a student will become a target of bullying, hence, their level of safety improves.

Bullying Behaviors in the Middle School

Verbal bullying was the most dominate form of bullying reported by students. Fifty-four percent, or 258 students, in our middle school reported being verbally bullied at least once on the 2008 post-BVQ. This data corresponds to the data I collected from the students in the focus group interviews and the school’s bully report form log. All three sources of information indicated that verbally bullying was the most prevalent type of bullying in our school. Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, and Scheidt (2001) measured the frequency of bullying by surveying 15, 686 American students in sixth through tenth grade at both private and public schools and

found that 29.9 percent of students reported moderate to frequent involvement in bullying. Our data indicated that 23 percent of our students reported moderate to frequent involvement in bullying. In 2007, fewer students reported being verbally bullied, but they were unaware that cell phone texting, instant messaging, written notes, and verbal comments are all venues for verbal bullying. Verbal bullying occurs in the classrooms, hallways, locker rooms, bathrooms, cafeteria, in every location where students interact with each other. Unfortunately, verbal bullying is also the most difficult form of bullying for teachers and adults to effectively intervene and stop. Students can be very sly as they spit hurtful comments in passing. Often verbal bullying is he said she said; unless bystanders witness the bullying or the student has the written form, it can be very difficult to reprimand. Therefore, decreasing verbally bullying again wraps back around to having a solid, well-oiled character education program. Students need to know what is appropriate and what will not be tolerated within the school community. Having discussions and providing examples of how damaging verbal bullying can be to a student is important. For example, a fifth grade male student in Atlanta committed suicide in the spring of 2009 after being repeatedly made fun of at school by being called gay or virgin, because he was from the Virgin Islands. Students need to know that words hurt. Schools need to take greater efforts to educate students about verbal bullying.

Physical bullying was reported by 25 percent, 121 students, on the 2008 post-BVQ. Physical bullying should be the easiest form of bullying for bystanders to observe. When a student physically harms another student serious consequences

ensue. Our school rules clearly define the disciplinary actions that will be taken if a student touches another student. The consequences and repercussions associated with physically bullying are more severe than for verbal or relational bullying.

Interestingly, the eighth grade focus group discussed a decline in physical bullying as they progressed through the middle school, but the 2008 post-BVQ showed that the percentage of eighth graders who reported being physical bullied nearly doubled from the previous year. Our administration concurred with the questionnaire findings and shared that most severe physical altercations occur with eighth grade students.

Relational bullying was reported by 139 students, or 29 percent of the school's population on the 2008 post-BVQ. Approximately 71 percent of students alleged they were NOT targets of relational bullying. As a sixth grade teacher, I encounter an abundance of relational issues among students. Almost on a daily basis, students, especially girls, come to me with complaints about exclusion, gossip, or rumors being spread. This data seems inaccurate to me.

I think several issues may have affected these results. First, students rarely associate issues that arise within their friend groups as bullying. Second, girls frequently shift in and out of social groups due to volatile love/hate relationships. I believe they {girl groups} often don't even realize they are bullying each other. In a study of middle school girls, participants described enduring bullying behaviors by their friends, but friendships remained intact (Casey-Cannon, Hayward, & Gowen, 2001). The "mean girls" that the eighth grade focus group spoke of, often consider

themselves to be sweet, popular, and “good girls,” I think it may be hard for them to label their behaviors as bullying, or hurtful to other students. My research and observations link relational bullying more often to girls, but it can and does occur within male peer circles as well.

The data proves that a substantial amount of bullying, verbal, physical, and relational, occurred among our students during the 2007-2008 school year. Numerous students were impacted by bullying behaviors.

Recommendations For Future Research

The data revealed in the 2008 post-BVQ illustrates an awareness of bullying behaviors, definitions, and strategies students learned through the Olweus Bully Prevention Program. One intensive year of the OBPP enabled students to discuss and begin to understand the components and harmful effects of bullying. I do believe that dedication by the entire school community to a comprehensive program can be effective in altering the climate and environment in a middle school setting.

However, the key word is dedication. To implement an anti-bullying or character education program, the entire school must be on board. The administration must set aside time and support to implement lesson plans, facilitate discussions, and bring the school together. The anti-bullying program must become an integral part of the school’s environment for a continued period of time. One year of the Olweus Bully Prevention Program is enough to impact, but not sustain real change within a school building. Students need repetition, consistency and to hear the same messages

over and over again from a variety of adults and students. It is important to follow through and maintain the energy level and stamina needed to support a fully functioning program.

My research has led me to believe that an anti-bullying program is the necessary first step in altering a school's environment. The next step must be the implementation of a solid character education program. Learning strategies and intervention techniques is critical for students to aid their bullied peers, but not a substitute for good character and positive behavior. I also believe that students need to lead the charge against bullying by promoting positive choices. Creating a vocal and strong student leadership group should be a critical piece to implementing a successful anti-bullying program.

I have several recommendations for a researcher who is interested in evaluating the Olweus Bully Prevention Program in a middle school setting. First, extend the research period beyond one year. To truly evaluate the "changed behaviors" of middle school students more than one school year is necessary to differentiate between increased awareness and decreased bullying incidents.

I would utilize the focus groups and conduct interviews in the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Discussing bullying issues with the same students at different points in the year may yield very different perspectives and insights. I also would increase the size of the focus groups to 10 or 12 students to enrich the discussion and feedback.

Secondly, I would recommend comparing at least three years of the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire. This would enable the researcher to follow the group of sixth grade students all three years in the middle school. Analyzing the BVQs from the same students as they progress through the middle school could offer interesting data and a unique perspective on bullying.

Finally, I would suggest interviewing or surveying faculty and staff at the school. Incorporating the faculty's and staff's perceptions and feelings about bullying could offer insight and provide another layer to understanding the bullying phenomenon with the school community.

Appendices

Appendix A: Bully Report Form

BULLYING REPORT FORM: Completed forms can be placed in "Bully Boxes" located in the Attendance Office, the Main Office, the Home and Careers Pod, at the Greeting Table, or in the Counseling Office. Forms can also be given to ANY faculty or staff members.

Date of Incident: _____ Time/ Class Period of Incident: _____

Name of Reporter: _____

Your Team (Place an "X" on your selection):

☐ orange 6 ☐ blue 7 ☐ teal 8

☐ purple 6 ☐ green 7 ☐ yellow 8

Location of Incident (Place an "X" on your selection):

☐ Cafeteria ☐ Locker Room ☐ Classroom: Rm # _____ or Teacher's Name _____

☐ Gym ☐ Bus Loop ☐ Other: _____

Hallway (Place an "X" on your selection):

☐ downstairs 6th grade pod ☐ downstairs 7th grade pod ☐ downstairs 8th grade pod

☐ upstairs 6th grade pod ☐ upstairs 7th grade pod ☐ upstairs 8th grade pod

Name(s) of Bully/Bullies: _____

Name(s) of Target(s): _____

Name(s) of Bystander(s): _____

Name(s) of Teacher(s) Present: _____

Incident Description (use reverse side if needed)

For Staff/Faculty Use Only

Name: _____

Action Taken: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B: Statement of Informed Consent for Minors

Parental Consent Form for Focus Group Interview

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR MINORS

This form describes a research study being conducted with students about their perceptions and attitudes on the climate of our school building and bullying behaviors. The purpose of this research is to determine if the Olweus Bully Prevention Program (OBPP) has been effective in reducing bullying behaviors among our students at the middle school. It is important to provide students the opportunity to share and reflect on the impact of the OBPP within our school.

The person conducting this research is faculty member, Lindsay Lazenby, a sixth grade social studies teacher on the orange team. Mrs. Lazenby is also a graduate student at SUNY Brockport. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be interviewed in a focus group made up of seven to ten students in your own grade level. The interview will be tape-recorded by Mrs. Lazenby. You will be asked to meet only once after-school in the library.

The possible benefit from participating in this study is that you will have the opportunity to provide an accurate image of the bullying situation in our school.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Acceptance or refusal to participate in the study, will not affect your grade or class standing. You are free to change your mind and withdraw from the study at any time.

I understand that:

1. My participation is voluntary and I have the right to refuse to answer any questions.
2. My confidentiality is guaranteed. My name will not be written on the survey. There will be no way to connect me to the written survey. If any publication results from this research, I would not be identified by name. Results will be given anonymously and in group form only, so that neither the participants nor the school can be identified. Also, the tape will be erased once the information has been written down.
3. There will be no anticipated personal risks because of participation in this project.

4. My participation involves reading a written survey of three questions and answering those questions in writing. Also, I will be interviewed in a group discussion, where I can voluntarily offer insight to questions asked. It is estimated that the survey and interview will take 30-45 minutes to complete.

5. Approximately 30 students will take part in this study. The results will be used for the completion of a research project by the primary researcher.

6. Data and consent forms will be kept separately in a locked filing cabinet by investigator and will be destroyed by shredding when the research has been completed.

You are being asked whether or not you want to participate in this study. If you wish to participate, and you agree with the statement below, please sign in the space provided.

Remember, you may change your mind at any point and withdraw from this study. You can refuse to participate even if your parent/guardian gives permission for you to participate.

I understand the information provided in this form and agree to participate in this project.

If you have any questions you may contact:

Primary researcher
Lindsay Lazenby
llazenby@genevacsd.org
(315) 781-0404

Signature of participant

Date

Birth date of participant

Signature of a witness 18 years of age or older

Date

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

This form describes a research study being conducted with students about their perceptions and attitudes on the climate of our school building and bullying behaviors. The purpose of this research is to determine if the Olweus Bully Prevention Program (OBPP) has been effective in reducing bullying behaviors among our students at the middle school. It is important to provide students a voice and allow them to reflect on the impact of the OBPP on our population.

The person conducting this research is faculty member, Lindsay Lazenby, a sixth grade social studies teacher on the orange team. Mrs. Lazenby is also a graduate student at SUNY Brockport. If you agree to have your child participate in this study, s/he will be interviewed in a focus group comprised of seven to ten students in their respected grade level. The interview will be tape-recorded by Mrs. Lazenby. Students will meet only once after-school in the library.

The possible benefit from participating in this study is that students will have the opportunity to provide an accurate image of the bullying situation in our school.

Your child's participation in this study is completely voluntary. Acceptance or refusal to participate in the study, will not affect your child's grade or class standing. S/he is free to change her/his mind and withdraw from the study at any time.

I understand that:

1. My child's participation is voluntary and s/he has the right to refuse to answer any questions.
2. My child's confidentiality is guaranteed. His/her name will not be written on the survey. There will be no way to connect my child to the written survey. If any publication results from this research, s/he would not be identified by name. Results will be given anonymously and in group form only, so that neither the participants nor the school can be identified. Also, the tape will be erased once the information has been transcribed.
3. There will be no anticipated personal risks because of participation in this project.
4. My child's participation involves reading a written survey of three questions and answering those questions in writing. Also, my child will be interviewed in a group discussion, where s/he will voluntarily offer insight to questions asked. It is estimated that the survey and interview will take 30-45 minutes to complete.

5. Approximately 30 students will take part in this study. The results will be used for the completion of a research project by the primary researcher.

6. Data and consent forms will be kept separately in a locked filing cabinet by investigator and will be destroyed by shredding when the research has been completed.

You are being asked whether or not you will permit your child to participate in this study. If you wish to give permission to participate, and you agree with the statement below, please sign in the space provided.

I understand the information provided in this form and agree to allow my child to participate as a participant in this project. I am 18 years of age or older. I have read and understand the above statements. All my questions about my child's participation in this study have been answered to my satisfaction.

If you have any questions you may contact:

Primary researcher

Lindsay Lazenby

llazenby@genevacsd.org

(315) 781-0404

Signature of parent or guardian

Date

Child's name

Appendix C: Focus Group Written Questions

Focus Group Discussion Questions

Focus Group Written Questions

Please circle: Female or Male

Grade _____

1. How would you define bullying?

2. What strategies do you use when you witness bullying?

3. Have you used the bully report forms this year? If so, please explain when.

4. Do you feel the bully boxes are useful for reporting bullying incidents?

Why or why not?

Focus Group Discussion Questions

The following questions will be used to measure student's perceptions and perspectives on bullying within our middle school. Students will independently answer questions 1, 3, and 4 in writing and then participate in a focus group discussion of all seven questions. The questions and our conversations around them will hopefully lead students to share and explore additional issues or thoughts about bullying.

1. How would you define bullying?
2. Do you feel safe at school? Why or why not?
3. What strategies do you use when you witness bullying?
4. Have you used the bully report forms this year? Please explain when.
 - a. Do you feel the bully boxes are useful for reporting bullying incidents? Why or why not?
5. Do you know students that are bullied often: on a daily or weekly basis?
 - a. Explain why you believe these students are bullied?
6. Do you know students that bully other students often? Why?
7. Describe a situation where you witnessed students, teachers, or staff displaying respectful and tolerant actions to people of different ethnicities, races, genders, or abilities?

Appendix D: Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire Instructions for Teachers

BVQ Questionnaire

BVQ Student Answer Sheet

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE REVISED OLWEUS BULLY/VICTIM QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

All of the text in the questionnaire including the response alternatives is to be read aloud by the person who administers the survey, called the Administrator, in the following. It is important that the Administrator thoroughly familiarizes himself/herself with these instructions in advance, and follows them carefully.

SOME GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

It is very important that the homeroom teacher carefully follow the instructions given below with regard to acting in a discreet manner, to collect the questionnaires without looking at them.

Make sure that the students sit as far apart from each other as possible so that they cannot see or copy others' answers. It is important to put an immediate stop to any tendencies towards commotion or kidding. In such cases, the students should be encouraged to take the matter seriously and to answer the questions honestly and properly.

The Administrator should preferably not walk around in the classroom, as this can easily be perceived as an attempt to see what the students have answered. However, if individual students have trouble filling out the questionnaire, the Administrator must, of course, provide the necessary assistance.

It is important to have as many students as possible answer the questionnaire. The survey normally can be completed in approximately one school period. The students should answer all questions without a break. The student normally should not leave the classroom.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. After the questionnaires are handed out, the Administrator should ask the students to fill out the name of the school, their grade, and the date. The Administrator should write this information on the blackboard.
2. The Administrator also should state that the purpose of the questionnaire survey is to gather information from the students about bullying and some other conditions

at the school in order to make the school environment as good and as safe as possible.

3. The Administrator then reads the following text (in bold) aloud to the students (including the various response choices). The same text is found on the second page of the questionnaire.

I will now read from my booklet and I would like you all to follow along carefully.

You will find questions in this booklet about your life in school. There are several answers next to each question. Each answer has a box in front of it with a letter inside. Like this:

1.	How do you like school?	A. I dislike school very much B. I dislike school C. I neither like nor dislike school D. I like school E. I like school very much

Answer the question by circling the answer that best describes how you feel about school. If you really dislike school, circle letter A in the box next to "I dislike school very much". If you really like school, circle letter E in the box next to "I like school very much", and so on. Only choose one answer. Record your choice on the answer sheet.

Now circle the box next to the answer that best describes how you feel about school and mark your choice on the answer sheet. If you mark the wrong answer, you can erase your answer

Don't put your name on this booklet. No one will know how you have answered these questions. But it is important that you answer carefully and how you really feel. Sometimes it is hard to decide what to answer. Then just answer how you think it is. If you have questions, raise your hand.

Most of the questions are about your life in school in the past couple of months, that is, the period from start of school after Summer/Christmas vacation until now. So when you answer, you should think of how it has been during the past 2 or 3 months and not only how it is just now.

Now you can answer the next question:

2.	Are you a boy or a girl ?	A. girl B. boy
----	---------------------------	-------------------

Has everyone answered question number 2? Does everyone understand what to do?

Now you can turn to the next page. I will read the text and you can follow along in your own booklet. (The Administrator reads all of questions aloud to ALL STUDENTS.)

3.	How many good friends do you have in your class(es)?	A. none B. I have 1 good friend in my class(es) C. I have 2 or 3 good friends in my class(es) D. I have 4 or 5 good friends in my class(es) E. I have 6 or more good friends in my class(es)
----	--	--

ABOUT BEING BULLIED BY OTHER STUDENTS

Here are some questions about being bullied by other students. First we define or explain the word bullying. We say a student is being bullied when another student, or several other students

- say mean and hurtful things or make fun of him or her or call him or her mean and hurtful names
-
- completely ignore or exclude him or her from their group of friends or leave him or her out of things on purpose
-
- hit, kick, push, shove around, or lock him or her inside a room
-
- tell lies or spread false rumours about him or her or send mean notes and try to make other students dislike him or her
-
- and other hurtful things like that.

When we talk about bullying, these things happen repeatedly, and it is difficult for the student being bullied to defend himself or herself. We also call it bullying, when a student is teased repeatedly in a mean and hurtful way.

But we don't call it bullying when the teasing is done in a friendly and playful way. Also, it is not bullying when two students of about equal strength or power argue or fight."

Does everyone understand what is meant by bullying?

If there are questions or comments about the meaning of the word bullying, the Administrator can elaborate and provide illustrative examples. It is important that the Administrator has a good understanding of the specified definition, which builds on three criteria. Bullying means:

- 1) negative, mean behavior that
- 2) occurs repeatedly (usually over a certain period of time)
- 3) in a relationship that is characterized by an imbalance of power or strength (the person who is bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself.)

It may be particularly difficult for the students to differentiate between teasing that is relatively friendly and benign (= not bullying) and mean and hurtful teasing (= bullying).

The Administrator then continues to read aloud all of the questions with their response options.

*Please collect all questionnaires and answer sheets.
Please turn all questionnaires and answer sheets to
the labeled box in the main office!*

Questionnaire for Students

School _____

Date: _____

Grade: _____

Please also place an X in the boxes below for your grade.

GRADE

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

You will find questions in this booklet about your life in school. There are several answers next to each question. Each answer has a box in front of it. Like this:

1.	How do you like school?	<input type="checkbox"/> A I dislike school very much <input type="checkbox"/> B I dislike school <input type="checkbox"/> C I neither like nor dislike school <input type="checkbox"/> D I like school <input type="checkbox"/> E I like school very much
----	-------------------------	--

Answer the question by circling the answer that best describes how you feel about school. If you really dislike school, circle letter A in the box next to "I dislike school very much". If you really like school, circle letter E in the box next to "I like school very much", and so on. Only choose one answer. Record your choice on the scantron.

Now circle the box next to the answer that best describes how you feel about school and mark your choice on the scantron.

Don't put your name on this booklet. No one will know how you have answered these questions. But it is important that you answer carefully and how you really feel. Sometimes it is hard to decide what to answer. Then just answer how you think it is. If you have questions, raise your hand.

Most of the questions are about **your life in school in the past couple of months, that is, the period from the start of school after Summer/Christmas vacation until now**. So when you answer, you should think of how it has been during the past 2 or 3 months and **not only how it is just now**.

2.	Are you a boy or a girl?	<input type="checkbox"/> A girl <input type="checkbox"/> B boy
----	--------------------------	---

3.	How many good friends do you have in your class(es)?	<input type="checkbox"/> A none <input type="checkbox"/> B I have 1 good friend in my class(es) <input type="checkbox"/> C I have 2 or 3 good friends in my class(es) <input type="checkbox"/> D I have 4 or 5 good friend in my class(es) <input type="checkbox"/> E I have 6 or more good friends in my class(es)
----	--	---

ABOUT BEING BULLIED BY OTHER STUDENTS

Here are some questions about being bullied by other students. First we define or explain the word bullying. We say a student is being bullied when another student, or several other students

- say mean and hurtful things or make fun of him or her or call him or her mean and hurtful names
- completely ignore or exclude him or her from their group of friends or leave him or her out of things on purpose
- hit, kick, push, shove around, or lock him or her inside a room
- tell lies or spread false rumors about him or her or send mean notes and try to make other students dislike him or her
- and other hurtful things like that.

When we talk about bullying, these things happen repeatedly, and it is difficult for the student being bullied to defend himself or herself. We also call it bullying, when a student is teased repeatedly in a mean and hurtful way.

But we don't call it bullying when the teasing is done in a friendly and playful way. Also, it is not bullying when two students of about equal strength or power argue or fight.

4.	How often have you <u>been bullied at school in the past couple of months?</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> A I haven't been bullied at school in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B it has only happened once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week
----	--	---

Have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months in one or more of the following ways? Please answer all questions.

5.	I was called mean names, was made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B only once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week
6.	Other students left me out of things on purpose, excluded me from their group of friends, or completely ignored me	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B only once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week
7.	I was hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B only once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week

Have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months in one or more of the following ways? Please answer all questions.

8.	Other students told lies or spread false rumors about me and tried to make others dislike me	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B only once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week
9.	I had money or other things taken away from me or damaged	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B only once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week
10.	I was threatened or forced to do things I didn't want to do	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B only once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week
11.	I was bullied with mean names or comments about my race or colour	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B only once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week
12.	I was bullied with mean names, comments, or gestures with a sexual meaning	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B only once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week

13.	I was bullied in another way	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B only once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week In this case, please write in what way: _____ _____
-----	------------------------------	---

14.	<u>In which class(es)</u> is the student or students who bully you?	<input type="checkbox"/> A I haven't been bullied at school in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B in my class <input type="checkbox"/> C in a different class but same grade (year) <input type="checkbox"/> D in a higher grade <input type="checkbox"/> E in a lower grade
15.	Have you been bullied by <u>boys</u> or <u>girls</u> ?	<input type="checkbox"/> A I haven't been bullied at school in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B by several girls <input type="checkbox"/> C by several boys <input type="checkbox"/> D by both boys and girls

16.	<p><u>By how many students</u> have you usually been bullied?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> A I haven't been bullied at school in the past couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> B mainly by 1 student</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> C by a group of 2-3 students</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> D by a group of 4 – 9 students</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> E by several different students or groups of students</p>
17.	<p><u>How long</u> has the bullying lasted?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> A I haven't been bullied at school in the past couple of months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> B it lasted one or two weeks</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> C it lasted about a month</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> D it has lasted about 6 months</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> E it has lasted about a year</p>
18.	<p><u>Where</u> have you been bullied ?</p> <p>Continue here if you have been bullied in the past couple of months:</p> <p>Have you been bullied</p> <p>19 on the playground/athletic field (during recess or break times)?</p> <p>20 in the hallways/ stairwells?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> A I haven't been bullied in the past couple of months (if you choose letter A, <u>skip to question 30</u>)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> B I have been bullied in one or more of the following places in the past couple of months (continue below):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A no</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> B yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A no</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> B yes</p>

Have you been bullied

21. in class (with teacher present)?

☐ A no

☐ B yes

22. in the classroom (with teacher absent)?

☐ A no

☐ B yes

23. in the bathroom?

☐ A no

☐ B yes

24. in gym class or the gym locker room/ shower?

☐ A no

☐ B yes

25. in the lunch room?

☐ A no

☐ B yes

26. on the way to and from school?

☐ A no

☐ B yes

27. at the school bus stop?

☐ A no

☐ B yes

28. on the school bus?

☐ A no

☐ B yes

29. somewhere else in school?

☐ A no

☐ B yes

In this case, please write where: _____

30. Have you told anyone that you have been bullied at school in the past couple of months?

Have you told (that you have been bullied)

31. your class (home room) teacher?

32. another adult at school (a different teacher, the principal/ headmaster, the school nurse, the custodian/ school caretaker, the school psychologist/ mental health professional etc)?

33. your parent(s)/guardian(s)?

34. your brother(s) or sister(s)?

35. your friend(s)?

36. somebody else?

☐ A I haven't been bullied at school in the past couple of months (if you choose letter A, skip to question 37)

☐ B I have been bullied but I have not told anyone (if you choose letter B, skip to question 37)

☐ C I have been bullied and I have told somebody about it (continue below)

☐ A no

☐ B yes

☐ A no

☐ B yes

☐ A no

☐ B yes

☐ A no

☐ B yes

☐ A no

☐ B yes

☐ A no

☐ B yes

In this case, please write who: _____

37.	How often do <u>the teachers or other adults at school</u> try to put a stop to it when a student is being bullied at school?	<input type="radio"/> A almost never <input type="radio"/> B once in a while <input type="radio"/> C sometimes <input type="radio"/> D often <input type="radio"/> E almost always
38.	How often do <u>other students</u> try to put a stop to it when a student is being bullied at school?	<input type="radio"/> A almost never <input type="radio"/> B once in a while <input type="radio"/> C sometimes <input type="radio"/> D often <input type="radio"/> E almost always
39.	Has <u>any adult at home</u> contacted the school to try to stop your being bullied at school in the past couple of months?	<input type="radio"/> A I haven't been bullied at school in the past couple of months <input type="radio"/> B no, they haven't contacted the school <input type="radio"/> C yes, they have contacted the school once <input type="radio"/> D yes, they have contacted the school several times
40.	When you see a student your age being bullied at school, what do you <u>feel or think</u> ?	<input type="radio"/> A that is probably what he or she deserves <input type="radio"/> B I don't feel much <input type="radio"/> C I feel a bit sorry for him or her <input type="radio"/> D I feel sorry for him or her and want to help him or her

ABOUT BULLYING OTHER STUDENTS

41.	How often have you <u>taken part in bullying another student(s)</u> at school the past couple of months?	<input type="radio"/> A I haven't bullied another student(s) at school in the past couple of months <input type="radio"/> B it has only happened once or twice <input type="radio"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="radio"/> D about once a week <input type="radio"/> E several times a week
-----	--	--

Have you bullied another student(s) at school in the past couple of months in one or more of the following ways? Please answer all questions.

42.	I called another student(s) mean names, made fun of or teased him or her in a hurtful way	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B it has only happened once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week
43.	I kept him or her out of things on purpose, excluded him or her from my group of friends or completely ignored him or her	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B it has only happened once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week
44.	I hit, kicked, pushed and shoved him or her around or locked him or her indoors	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B it has only happened once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week
45.	I spread false rumors about him or her and tried to make others dislike him or her	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B it has only happened once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week
46.	I took money or other things from him or her or damaged his or her belongings	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B it has only happened once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week
47.	I threatened or forced him or her to do things he or she didn't want to do	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B it has only happened once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week

48.	I bullied him or her with mean names or comments about his or her race or colour	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B it has only happened once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week
49.	I bullied him or her with mean names, comments, or gestures with a sexual meaning	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B it has only happened once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week
50.	I bullied him or her in another way	<input type="checkbox"/> A it hasn't happened in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B it has only happened once or twice <input type="checkbox"/> C 2 or 3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> D about once a week <input type="checkbox"/> E several times a week In this case, please write in what way: _____ _____
51.	Has <u>your class (home room) teacher or any other teacher</u> talked with you about your bullying other students at school in the past couple of months?	<input type="checkbox"/> A I haven't bullied other student(s) at school in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B no, they haven't talked with me about it <input type="checkbox"/> C yes, the have talked with me about it once <input type="checkbox"/> D yes, they have talked with me about it several times
52.	Has <u>any adult at home</u> talked with you about your bullying other students at school in the past couple of months?	<input type="checkbox"/> A I haven't bullied other student(s) at school in the past couple of months <input type="checkbox"/> B no, they haven't talked with me about it <input type="checkbox"/> C yes, the have talked with me about it once <input type="checkbox"/> D yes, they have talked with me about it several times

53.	Do you think you could join in bullying a student whom you didn't like?	<input type="radio"/> A yes <input type="radio"/> B yes, maybe <input type="radio"/> C I don't know <input type="radio"/> D no, I don't think so <input type="radio"/> E no
54.	How do you <u>usually react</u> if you see or understand that a student your age is being bullied by other students?	<input type="radio"/> A I have never noticed that students my age have been bullied <input type="radio"/> B I take part in the bullying <input type="radio"/> C I don't do anything, but I think the bullying is OK <input type="radio"/> D I just watch what goes on <input type="radio"/> E I try to help the bullied student in one way or another
55.	How often are you <u>afraid of being bullied</u> by other students in your school?	<input type="radio"/> A never <input type="radio"/> B seldom <input type="radio"/> C sometimes <input type="radio"/> D fairly often <input type="radio"/> E often
56.	Overall, how much do think <u>your class (home room) teacher</u> has done to <u>counteract bullying</u> in the past couple of months?	<input type="radio"/> A little or nothing <input type="radio"/> B fairly little <input type="radio"/> C somewhat <input type="radio"/> D a good deal <input type="radio"/> E much

BVQ Student Answer Sheet

Grade:

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